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SOME PROBLEMS OF TENANCY IN YORUBA LAND TENURE

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SYNOPSIS

The traditional pattern of Yoruba land tenure differed little from other forms of tribal land tenure found in Africa. The lineage was the basic land holding unit, legends telling how an immigrant and his kinsmen, on arriving at a town, would be given by its ruler a block of land to be used by his descendants in perpetuity. This land became divided between the segments of the lineage to a degree determined largely by the local density of population. One's obligations to one's elders, chiefs and ruler in respect of one's land were almost inseparable from social and political obligations. The scale of migration increased with the civil wars of the 19th century. Some immigrants put themselves under the protection of one man but received land from another; political obligations and those in respect of land thus became separated. Originally the tenant made a token payment in kind but with an increasing shortage of land and, still more, with the introduction of cocoa growing, these payments were made in money.

THE traditional system of Yoruba land tenure differed little in basic principles from other forms of tribal land tenure found in Africa. However the wars and migrations of people during the nineteenth century did much to modify this system and to create one where the land held by the individual was much more clearly demarcated than before. In the present century many of these tendencies have been continued so that a system of tenancy has resulted whereby one man receives land from another to whom he is not related by blood or political allegiance and to whom he makes an annual payment known as *ifakɔlɛ*. The spread of this custom is the result of decline of tribal political authority of the possibility of appeal against the judgments of the chiefs in land disputes and of the substitution of a tax paid in cash for the traditional forms of tribute. It has also been hastened by the introduction of a cash crop (cocoa) into the peasant economy.

The changes are most marked in the areas around the largest commercial towns such as Lagos and Abeokuta where land is now leased and sold quite openly. In the more backward towns, such as Iwo, Ado Ekiti or Shaki, from which the facts presented here were gained, lease and sale of land is still infrequent. In these towns the chiefs are, on the whole, opposed to radical changes in the system of land tenure so that where these changes take place it is without their sanction. As a consequence the chiefs have not attempted to lay down any general principles to meet the changing situation. Rather have their Court judgments appeared to be a series of *ad hoc* decisions which frequently contradicted each other. Thus in each town one does not find a neatly codified law, but a series of

adaptations made to the traditional system which may follow a general pattern, but which vary considerably in detail.[1]

YORUBA AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

Yoruba farming is still primitive; the farmer uses only the short-handled hoe for cultivation and the axe and matchet for clearing land. He is able to cultivate from an acre to an acre and a half each year. A large number of crops are known to the Yoruba farmer among which are his staple foods — yam, cassava, cocoyam, maize and guinea corn — together with melons, beans and cotton. These crops are usually interplanted, some growing on the tops of the heaps or ridges while others grow between them. Yoruba agriculture is not, strictly speaking, shifting agriculture but rotational farming, for the farmer will cultivate a plot for three, four or more years and then allow the land to revert to bush until it is again needed for cropping. Since trees are not uprooted but merely lopped and used as stakes up the yam vines climb, the fallow land quickly becomes overgrown.

The length of the rotation and of the subsequent fallow period depends largely on the density of population. In Ekiti, where the density is only 150 persons per square mile, it seems common for land to be cultivated for only two years when it may be left fallow for ten or more years. In Iwo, where the population density reaches 450 persons per square mile land may be cultivated for a period of from four to seven years and then left fallow for a similar period. The shorter the fallow period the more quickly does the vegetation of the area become transformed from dry forest to forms of derived savannah.

The Yoruba farm is cultivated by a man and his unmarried sons. Women do little farm work; they do not cultivate crops and thus have no rights in land. They may help their husbands to harvest crops and they will collect wild fruits, leaves and firewood from their husbands' land. They also manufacture palm oil. In the nineteenth century slaves and pledged persons (*iwɔ́fa*) were also part of the labour group. To-day a man may hire labourers. The traditional forms of co-operative labour are dying out. These did not amount to collective farming; a man could have an *ɔwɛ* which consisted of calling all his friends and relatives to help him on one particular day when he would provide drummers to stimulate effort and a rich feast at the end of the day. *Aro* groups were formed when a small number of men agreed to work on the farms of each member in turn; but each man was responsible for the management of his own farm and its harvest was his own property.

TRADITIONAL YORUBA LAND TENURE

It is no longer admissible to regard Yoruba land tenure either as a form of primitive communism where every man had an equal right in all land held by the tribe or as a form of feudal tenure with the chief being the owner of the land and his subjects being allowed to cultivate it at his pleasure. The basic principles of tribal land tenure have been clearly outlined by Gluckman.[2] In the first place a person does not own the land but owns rights over the land. "The communal ownership in tribal land tenure can thus be resolved into a right of every member of the tribe to a certain minimum of the tribe's territory. He has the right as subject of the chief; and conversely anyone wishing to use the land must give allegiance to the chief."[3] The chief is the trustee of the land; he not only has rights over the land but also obligations in his use of it. The rights held by a paramount chief may be delegated to a minor chief who may in turn delegate them to a lineage head and thus to an individual person. If any person fails to exercise his rights over the land these rights revert to the superior holder of the rights.

[1] Although many Yorubas, particularly in Oyo and Ibadan Provinces, are now Moslems, Moslem law does not appear to have had any effect in modifying the traditional system of land tenure. Court judgments continue to be given even by Moslem chiefs, according to Yoruba tribal law and not according to Moslem law.

[2] M. GLUCKMAN, in "Human Problems of Central Africa". [3] M. GLUCKMAN, op. cit.

The details of Yoruba land tenure are already well known.[1] But the descriptions which have been given although largely accurate, have been by lawyers and administrators anxious to produce a codified law. The social and political structure has been omitted or treated briefly and this would appear to be one reason why tenancy and *ifakɔlɛ* have been so often misunderstood.

The Yoruba live in large towns although a majority of the people are still farmers. In Ibadan Province over three quarters of the people live in towns with more than 20,000 inhabitants. In other provinces the towns are smaller but settlements of 8,000–20,000 people are common. These towns are formed of a large number of compounds each of which may have from fifty to five hundred people. The adult males of a compound trace their descent from a common ancestor; they belong to one lineage. Thus the town may be described as a federation of lineages.

The Yoruba lineage (*idile*) consists of the descendants in the male line of the lineage founder who is believed to have migrated to the town from another part of the country. It would appear that the lineage founder did not in most cases, come alone, but with a large number of kinsmen and followers; however, their names have been forgotten and nobody now claims descent from them. These migrations were not the slow drift of people seeking farm land but the violent expulsion of people who had fought unsuccessfully to gain a chieftaincy title in their home town or whose town was destroyed by war. In a few cases only are the lineage founders said to have been native doctors who wandered from town to town or men who moved to a new environment to be cured of impotance.

Yoruba marriage is virilocal. The compound (*agbo ile*) is the residence of the living adult male members of the lineage, together with their wives — who must, by laws of exogamy, come from other lineages — and their unmarried children. The members of a lineage often have common facial marks and worship a deity associated solely with their lineage; they also observe a common set of food taboos and in some towns each lineage possesses its own distinctive name which may either be that of a totemic animal or else a name by which lineage members may be addressed.

The size of lineages varies with their antiquity and with their importance. Those of kings (*ɔba*) or chiefs (*ijoye*, *oloye*) are largest, for such to the holders have the greatest number of wives. Thus in Iwo the lineage of the Oluwo or king probably today numbers more than five thousand people; those of the senior chiefs number from five hundred to a thousand people. The population of Iwo is over 80,000 people and there are estimated to be more than two hundred lineages, some of which extend over several compounds. The average size of the lineage is approximately 400 persons. In the smaller towns of Oyo and Ekiti the lineages are less big.

The lineage which is descended from the man considered to be the founder of the town is known as the ruling lineage and from its members is chosen the ruler whether he be a crowned king (*ɔba*) or merely a subordinate ruler (in Oyo *balɛ*). When a man emigrated with his followers from his home town he might have settled either on uncleared land far from neighbouring towns or else in a town already established. In the former case the lineage head of the newly founded lineage held all the rights over the land around his settlement and towards the farmlands of neighbouring settlements.

When later migrants came to such an area they were not allowed to settle on any land which took their fancy but were obliged to report themselves to the ruler of the existing settlement. They promised their allegiance to him and daughters were probably exchanged in marriage. They built their compounds in his town. Large settlements were always the best form of protection against raiders; the migrant who was fleeing to escape the wrath of a rival chief would have been safest in seeking the protection of another ruler. Thus the settlement pattern became one of large towns separated by several miles of farm and uncleared forest and

[1] See especially H. L. WARD-PRICE. *Land Tenure in the Yoruba Provinces*. (Lagos : 1939.) C. W. ROWLING. *Reports on Land Tenure in Ondo Province*. (Lagos : 1952.) T. O. ELIAS. *Nigerian Land Law and Custom*. (London : 1951.)

not one of numerous small hamlets scattered at short distances from one another.

To the leader each set of migrants who proposed to establish a separate lineage in the town the ruler, in return for his allegiance, was obliged to indicate land within the town where he might build his compound and land where his people might farm. The land given for farming would not have been land already cleared and used by members of the ruling lineage, but forest land. A large area, often covering several hundred acres, was given, as the land was intended for the use of the members of the new lineage in perpetuity. The boundary of the land was marked by prominent natural features such as streams and rock outcrops, by paths and by *peregun* trees (*Dracaena fragrans*). It seems likely that, in many cases, the land of the new lineage was demarcated on three sides only and that on the fourth side it stretched towards the land claimed by the neighbouring town. In course of time all the land originally held by the ruler of the town and not farmed by members of the ruling lineage would be allocated to the lineages which came later to the town.

The settlement pattern thus became one of a town composed of a number of compounds in which live the adult male members of the lineage surrounded by large blocks of land held by these lineages. On the lineage farm land one finds hamlets (*aba*) in which the lineage members sleep when working at the farm. These hamlets are not the permanent residence of any people and ceremonies such as marriages and funerals are celebrated in the town compound. In small Ekiti towns of 5,000 inhabitants the farms extend three miles from the town; in Iwo many farms are seven miles and some even ten miles from the town. Ekiti towns are usually divided into four, five or six quarters in each of which there is either a single large lineage or one dominant lineage and some smaller ones. Here the boundaries of the quarters of the town radiate from the town into the surrounding farm lands; each quarter farms the land adjacent to it. In Iwo, with a large number of lineages the pattern resembles a patch work quilt; those lineages which settled earliest in the town have land nearest to the town; later lineages farm at a distance from the town. The area of the farm land held by each lineage is by no means equal; the differences possibly reflect the importance of the lineage when it was first founded and the amount of land available at that time.

The head of each lineage (*bale* or *olori ebi*) usually the oldest male member of the lineage, was responsible for allocating the land among the lineage members. The general principle was that a man should have as much land as he and his dependents (his children and, in the last century, slaves and pledged persons) could cultivate. In general a man farmed on or near the land cultivated by his own father for it was the duty of a father to provide land for his children when they reached the age of marriage. Thus the lineage land tended to become divided among the segments of the lineage. Such divisions are more rigid where the population density is high. In Ekiti where the density is relatively low and where crop rotations are short it is said that a man may farm anywhere as his lineage land, merely indicating his intentions to the lineage head. Only, it was said, when a man was a nuisance to his neighbours would he be told to farm where his father farmed. In Iwo with a high density of population, a man to-day usually farms on his father's land; here, land which is lying fallow is usually held by an individual or by a group of brothers. Only when it was clear that one segment of a lineage had insufficient members to cultivate the land would the lineage head send members of another segment to the place. When a man could not get sufficient lineage land from his father or his close paternal relatives he would apply to the lineage head who was obliged to help him to find land to farm on the lineage land. A man had no rights to land outside the land of his own lineage. He might apply to the lineage head of his mother's lineage, and informants say that such a request would be favourably received. A man might also apply to the ruler of his town for land as yet unallocated to any lineage. In all disputes over land within the lineage the lineage head was the arbitrator.

The rights over land held by the individual farmer were merely the rights to cultivate the land and to retain for himself the crops which he

grew; i.e. he held usufructory rights only. The trees on the land belonged to the lineage head.[1] Until the present century the oil palm and the kola-nut tree were the principal economic trees and these grew wild. The lineage head had the right to allocate the palm trees to the women married to men of his lineage; in Iwo these women made oil and brought from 25 per cent to 50 per cent of their production to the lineage head. In Ekiti, the lineage head now leases palm trees to immigrant Sobos who make an annual payment to him of cash and oil. The women reaped the kola-nuts and sold the harvest, but, apart from a small commission the money they received was given to the lineage head. A man had the right to the fruits of all trees which he himself planted. Women had the right to gather wild fruits, leaves and firewood on their husbands farms. Other rights were comparatively ill-defined; trees useful for timber were of value only to the carvers and sawyers who could fell a tree and merely pay compensation to the farmer for damaging his crops and living and eating in his hamlet. Professional hunters would normally hunt in the thick forest and could kill animals on any such land.[2] Where a stream ran through lineage land, the lineage head might erect a trap or pool for his own use.

Once a ruler allocated land to a lineage founder he renounced almost all his rights over the land. He held no right to any fixed proportion of the crop, he held no rights over the economic trees nor with certain exceptions to animals killed on the land.[3] He could not send any other person to farm on the land without the consent of the lineage head. Only if all the members of the lineage died or left the town did the rights over the land revert to the ruler. These rights of the lineage head to the land were almost never infringed by the rulers.

Whilst the Yoruba farmer did not make payments to any overlord in respect of the actual land held by him he was expected to pay tribute (*isin*) annually to his lineage head, the chief of his quarter and his ruler. Every Yoruba was expected to maintain his parents in their old age. He also made periodic gifts to his lineage head for not only was the lineage head usually an old man but he entertained strangers on behalf of the lineage members and took up their legal disputes. At the annual festivals of the town the lineage head collected yams and palm oil and presented them to his quarter chief who, after taking a share for himself, conveyed the tribute to the king. Informants say that the amount of tribute was never fixed; a man gave what he could and a poor man would not have been penalized for giving nothing.

A lineage head, chief or ruler could also call upon those who owed allegiance to him to work for a few days each year on his farm. They could also call for labour to build their houses and when they went to war their men were expected to follow them and to yield to them a proportion — often a half or two thirds — of the booty, including slaves, taken by them.

STRANGERS AND TENANCY

We have dealt so far with the groups of immigrants who came to a town, paid homage to its ruler and received from him land to be farmed by the lineage members in perpetuity. We must now discuss the cases of those immigrants who came to a town after all the land had been initially allocated or who came in such small numbers or in such circumstances that they could not apply for a block of lineage land.

In Iwo and Ado Ekiti some of the smaller lineages received their land not from the ruler of the town but from another lineage. Thus in Iwo, Olukotun lineage holds land several square miles in extent to the north of the town; on this land farm the members of Elemo lineage. It is said that the founder of Elemo lineage gave one of his daughters to Chief Olukotun to create blood ties between the two lineages. The head of Olukotun lineage demarcated for the members of Elemo lineage a block of land on the further side of Olukotun land which was probably, at that time, forested. Chief Olukotun also gave to the new lineage land in his own quarter on which to build their compound.

[1] Ward-Price, par. 39, 57.
[2] Ward-Price, par. 24.
[3] Certain animals such as the python are royal property and, when killed, must be taken to the king.

The members of Elemo lineage not only had usufructory rights over the farm land but also over the economic trees; thus they had the same tenure as if they had held the land from the ruler himself. In some respects Elemo lineage was a vassal of Olukotun lineage. Its members paid their tribute to the ruler through Chief Olukotun; they performed tribute labour on his farms and house; they brought gifts when senior members of Olukotun lineage were holding any social or religious ceremony. But these forms of tribute were little different from those paid by members of lineages residing in the quarter over which Chief Olukotun had jurisdiction but holding their land directly from the ruler. In Ado Ekiti the same process appears to have taken place, the smaller lineages having received both town and farm land from the quarter chief to whom they pay their tribute. The tribute appears to arise from the political allegiance determined by the location of one's compound rather than from the grant of land.

Those immigrants who arrived in a town singly or in small groups did not receive blocks of lineage land. They were often fugitives from justice in another kingdom, itinerant traders or craftsmen or native doctors. The political structure of the Yoruba town had no place for individuals — everyone must be attached to a lineage or a chief. The refugee would have placed himself in the protection of some powerful chief; traders stayed with friends. Several elders to-day say that their forefathers came to the town having made friendships on the battle field. These men lived in the compounds of their protectors and were given farm land not from dense bush but from land on which lineage members were then farming. Any member of a lineage had the right to bring a friend to farm on lineage land; he was expected to introduce the friend at a lineage meeting and to obtain the approval of the lineage elders.[1] The friend brought palm wine and kola-nuts as a token of friendship and these were consumed by those present as witnesses to the bond. It was quite unnecessary for the lineage head to inform the ruler of this bond as he had full rights to dispose of the land in this way. Such a friend usually lived with the lineage member who introduced him and the latter gave him cleared land to cultivate near his own farms. A stranger given land in this way had the same rights over his land as a lineage member; i.e. he had usufructory rights over the land while the lineage head retained the rights over the trees. These rights passed to the children of the stranger. In many cases it would appear that the descendants of these strangers became adopted into the lineage with whose members they lived, the original man being cited in the genealogies as a son or brother of his protector.

In Ado Ekiti the ruler to-day has little land which has not already been allocated to lineages and, for a century at least, he has been unable to provide land for his numerous children. It was customary for the ruler's wives to live in their own compounds whilst rearing their children and many children eventually built their own compounds on the town land and farmed on the farmland of their mother's lineage. Being members of the ruling lineage they did not become adopted into their mother's lineages but remained as small segments of the ruling lineage. It seems uncertain whether these members of the ruling lineage have rights over the palm and kola-nut trees on the land on which they farm, or whether they can bring strangers on to the land without informing the lineage head. In one case a lineage head who had given land in this way to members of the ruling lineage claimed the right to reap the economic trees, but did not exercise these rights. Such members of the ruling lineage paid their tribute to the chief in whose quarter they resided.

In Iwo such a situation did not arise, for as a result of the wars at the beginning of the nineteenth century the ruler was able to annex land across the Oshun and Oba rivers, which he then distributed to members of his own lineage and to strangers.

This process by which lone immigrants were absorbed into the towns and lineages apparently worked while the scale of migration within the Yoruba kingdoms was small. During the nineteenth century, as a result of the Fulani invasions, of the civil wars within Oyo and of the later conquests of Ibadan and Ilorin, the migrations assumed much greater proportions.

[1] WARD-PRICE, par. 85.

In Iwo the elders of many lineages said that they possessed no lineage land, for when their ancestors first came to the town they were warriors. These men had presumably been attached to war bands which had lived mainly from plunder. At this time the lineages of the war chiefs expanded rapidly in size as the successful warriors took their captive women to wife; to-day few of them have large areas of land which can be given out to strangers who come to the town. Many of the nineteenth century warriors and chiefs did in fact receive farmland from the chief in whose protection they placed themselves even when they did not live in his compound but aimed to found independent lineages. But in the circumstances they were given small plots only and their children were expected to confine their farming within the allotted area. If the land later became insufficient some of these children were obliged to beg for land from other lineages. Much of the land acquired by the Oluwo of Iwo across the Oshun and Oba rivers was given out to his children who were prepared to allocate it to these refugees and warriors. These men — we may call them tenants[1] — would have made a token gift to the man or lineage head who granted him the land. These gifts were often costly, consisting of gin and kola-nuts, but they did not constitute a sale of the land but only of the bond between the two parties. The tenant would also be expected to make an annual present to the grantor, to attend his ceremonies and festivals and to behave as his follower. For failing to show due respect to the grantor in this manner the tenant could be turned off the land. The land, with the rights and duties attached to its tenancy, passed on the death of the original tenant to his junior brothers and sons. The tenant had the right to cultivate the land; he was not allowed to reap the economic trees nor to plant further trees as this would make his tenure of the land more permanent. Whilst farming the tenant would probably live in the *aba* or hamlet belonging to the lineage whose land he held; here he would be under the authority of the lineage head or his representative, but only for matters relating to the *aba* or the land. In several cases the tenant lived in a different quarter of the town from that of the grantor of his land; thus he was expected to pay his annual tribute to the ruler through the chief of his own quarter whilst also acting as a follower to the chief or lineage head from whom he received land.

In Ekiti developments of this order hardly took place, for the Ekitis were constantly raided and did not receive the influx of refugees from the north as did the towns around Ibadan.

From the cessation of the wars until the present time the mobility of the people has increased and in most towns land has been given out to traders or craftsmen from other towns. With increasing population the number of men who were unable to get enough farmland from their own lineage has risen. Such men were granted land over which they held tenant rights. The need to belong to a large lineage or to be adopted into one no longer exists as the modern police and courts protect the rights of the individual. These men have not, thus, received the same rights over the land as have members of the lineage holding the land. They may not extend the land allotted to them nor use it or plant economic trees.

In many cases however tenants, relying on their happy relations with the lineage head, have in fact planted economic trees on their land, and many tenants beg for land expressly to plant cocoa on it, their own farms being too small or too open country.

These rights were granted to the tenant on condition that he paid the customary tribute to the lineage head who gave him the land. By behaving in the manner of a follower of his protector he acknowledged his inferior position. To-day these forms of tribute are falling into desuetude. The annual tribute of crops paid to one's chief and ruler has been replaced by the tax in cash levied by the Native Authority. Tribute labour on farms and buildings is rarely performed. Many of the religious ceremonies at which such tribute was paid are no longer celebrated in the traditional manner. The lineage head would not now be justified in turning a tenant off his land for failing to act in the traditional manner; he can only turn

[1] The use of the word tenant is one of mere convenience ; it is not suggested that the rights and duties of Yoruba tenants are comparable to those in England.

him off if he positively offends the lineage members. The security of the tenant over his land is thus increased. His position is also strengthened when he is allowed to use the economic trees. Boundaries fixed a generation or more ago are often known but slightly to the present farmers and many descendants of tenants (themselves tenants, of course) have claimed in the courts that their land extends beyond its actual limits, or that they hold the land not as tenants of a lineage head but from the ruler himself, thus abrogating to themselves the same rights as are held by a lineage head.

The solution adopted by the Yoruba is the custom of paying *ifakɔlɛ*.[1] This is an annual payment of crops, usually yams, which is obligatory upon the tenant. The amount is usually small; in both Ado Ekiti and Iwo it was said that nine big yams were an adequate *ifakɔlɛ* for one thousand heaps ($\frac{1}{4}$-$\frac{1}{3}$ acre) of land; this would amount to less than 2 per cent of the crop. The tenant could be turned off for failure to pay *ifakɔlɛ*; he is not prevented from making additional payments in the traditional manner if he so wishes.

In Iwo many tenants have been paying *ifakɔlɛ* for as long as they can remember. But there seems to be nothing to prevent a lineage head from imposing *ifakɔlɛ* at any time. It is common for a tenant to go to court to claim increased rights over his land; if the tenant's case fails the lineage head will often impose *ifakɔlɛ* to prevent further dispute over the land. The court judges are loath to turn a tenant off the land which he farms, for the landless man would become a social problem which the same judges, as legislators would have to solve. The function of *ifakɔlɛ* is merely to make plain the fact that a farmer is tenant and that he does not have the rights of a lineage head or a lineage member over the lineage land.

Many tenants in Iwo do not, in fact, pay *ifakɔlɛ* for the relations between them and their lineage heads are not strained and the latter do not fear that the former will encroach upon their rights. In Ekiti it was said that *ifakɔlɛ* would not be imposed on another man of the same town; in such cases it was felt that the chiefs still had enough knowledge of local land holding to be able to decide cases satisfactorily. In larger towns the chiefs could not be expected to know all the changes in land holding which had taken place over the last century. In Ado Ekiti it was said that *ifakɔlɛ* would only be imposed on non-Ado men, for these were likely to exceed their rights as tenants. In no town would *ifakɔlɛ* be normally imposed on a man from a closely related lineage, for he would be expected to act towards the lineage head as a son and not as a tenant.

The right to receive *ifakɔlɛ* is usually reserved for the lineage head holding the lineage land. Where a younger member of the lineage has brought a friend to farm on the land as a tenant, he may collect the *ifakɔlɛ* himself but should give most of it to his lineage head. A tenant should not sub-let his land without the permission of the lineage head.

The following document is an illustration of the type of contract which is often made in a tenancy agreement.[2]

> "This is to certify that I the undersigned by name S. S. I. of A's house at Oluponna via Iwo in the Province of Oyo Nigeria do hereby avow that a piece of land is leased from the Oluwo of Iwo through Prince Y of D.A's house Iwo which is about 20,000 heaps [3] of land valuable for plantation of cocoa trees and other crops.
>
> "That the said portion of land is at Ipade Oba and Oshun River near Odo Oba Station bounded on the right, left and bottom by S's farm land and on the upper part by Oshun River.
>
> "That the portion of land is given to me under some money as annual emolument, this may be £1 or as the case may be, with a few crops if possible but the £1 is grand ishakole on this portion of land allotted to me.
>
> "That I shall be on the land forever provided that I remain in normal behaviour and abide with the instructions of my land lord; he may

[1] WARD-PRICE, par. 36, 92, 114, 117.

[2] The document was typed by a semi-literate letter-writer; the original wording has been retained. Names have been omitted to prevent any possible embarrassment to those concerned.

[3] About 5 acres.

send me out or take his land off me should I go contrary to his will.

Signed: S. S. I.

Witness and representative of landowner:

L.S."

In this case the tenant was presumably to be allowed to plant economic trees, and hence, perhaps, the cash *ifakɔlɛ*. In other agreements tenants promised not to harvest the palm trees, this being the sign of this tenancy, even when they planted cocoa and kola trees. It does appear however that a tenant who is paying *ifakɔlɛ* was more likely to be allowed to reap palm trees than one who pays no *ifakɔlɛ*, and many informants state that the land of an *ifakɔlɛ* paying tenant would be respected, in that wives of lineage members would not go there to gather fruits or firewood.

Claims for *ifakɔlɛ* now form the basis of many land disputes between towns. Under the traditional political system a man was a subject of the ruler in whose town he lived. The boundary of a town was usually a loosely defined line between the farmlands of the members of one town and those of the members of another town. If one town grew in size and became short of land its policy was to seize land by raids or wars; those farming on the conquered land would either be driven off or assimilated into the victorious town. There was no system whereby a man owed political allegiance to one ruler but farmed on land held by another ruler. In recent decades, the dangers from wars having passed, men have returned to farm near the extremities of their town's land, and often disputes arise over the exact boundary in what used to be virtually a no-man's-land. Town rulers have claimed in the courts that some natural feature was the boundary of their land; some claims are wildly extravagant. Often the court has ordered that a certain area of land, at that time being farmed by men from one town, be given to the neighbouring town. But the men on this land continued to live in their compounds in their own town and to pay their tax there; they were obliged to pay *ifakɔlɛ* to the ruler, or his representative, of the town on whose land they were judged to be farming. In a single stroke the rights of these farmers, which were those of lineage heads and lineage members, could be transformed into rights of tenants.

COCOA GROWING

Cocoa growing has raised two further problems. In the first place cocoa is a tree which bears fruit for many years; few trees planted in Yoruba country have yet died from natural causes. The trees are planted so that a continuous cover is provided and no other crops can be grown; a few palm and kola trees may be left among the cocoa trees. Thus once cocoa has been planted the land can have no further use and it often looks slightly pedantic to consider the ownership of the land apart from the trees. Secondly, cocoa is a valuable crop which yields a considerable profit to the farmer.

As we have seen, it is an axiom of tribal land tenure that every member of the tribe is entitled to land for his house and farm. Thus, in a Yoruba town, land has always been freely given to immigrants. The tribute or *ifakɔlɛ* which was paid was considered to be a sign of the man's political and economic position in relation to his lineage head, chief and ruler. It was not considered by a chief or ruler that their rights over the land entitled them to claim a part of the product of the land by another man's labour. For while agriculture remained technologically backward a man could rarely become rich except by controlling the labour of dependants and slaves. To-day a lineage head with a large area of forested land has a commodity of great potential value for, with relatively little labour, it can be planted with cocoa to yield high returns. In giving out such land to a stranger the lineage head felt that he was entitled to part of the reward. He would thus demand *ifakɔlɛ* in cash in cases where he would not demand it if only food crops were to be planted. It may be noted here that a similar situation is found within the towns where "rent" is charged for land on which a tenant builds a shop, hotel, or house for letting, while land for private dwellings is given out freely. In most cases in Iwo and Ado Ekiti it would appear that the *ifakɔlɛ* paid for land on which cocoa is grown is often between

1 per cent and 5 per cent of the value of the crop.[1] Documents prepared in such cases often state that the lineage head may vary the *ifakɔlɛ* according to the price of cocoa although the sum demanded should not differ greatly from that paid by other tenants in the neighbourhood.

A tenant with cocoa on his land may still legally be evicted for refusing to pay *ifakɔlɛ*; in practice it is difficult to expel a man from land on which he has tree crops since he is entitled to their full value. The lineage head must either buy the trees himself or find a third person, agreeable to himself, who will buy them.

Cocoa has come to be treated as movable property which can be bought, sold and mortgaged. This has probably retarded the growth of sale and lease of land in the more backward cocoa growing areas. In former times a Yoruba could raise a loan by pledging a person whose labour for the creditor formed the interest and security on the loan. Such a pledged person was known as an *iwɔfa*. This practice is now illegal although most Yoruba regard it as being fair and humane. The usufructory mortgage of cocoa trees has tended to take the place of this pledging of persons.[2] The trees are pledged for small sums — rarely above £20 — for one or more seasons, to be redeemed as soon as the debt is paid. Cocoa trees are often sold outright, usually for a relatively small sum as the seller is in need of the money.

In these cases it is usually stipulated in the documents that when a tenant sells his cocoa or loses it to his creditor who has foreclosed upon his mortgage, the rights and duties of the tenant over the land pass to the new owner of the trees who may thus be obliged to pay *ifakɔlɛ*. When the seller of the trees has the rights of a lineage member or lineage head over the land on which the trees grow the buyer merely receives the trees; he gains no rights over the land nor should he plant new trees. But the seller of the trees, whilst retaining his land rights, cannot usually exercise them while the land is occupied by the cocoa; he can but wait until the trees die when the land should, in theory, be his to use. In practice, the law would appear to be confused on this point as with long occupancy of land the holder often assumes greater rights over it.

CONCLUSION

Under traditional forms of Yoruba land tenure a man received farmland from the ruler or chief to whom he owed political allegiance; the rights and duties of ruler and subject in respect of the land were thus inseparable from political obligations. Where the density of population was relatively low and land plentiful, the boundaries between individual farmers on lineage land were often ill-defined. During the last century the population density over much of Yoruba country has increased, not only as a result of the influx of refugees and warriors from the destroyed towns of Oyo, but also from the natural increase in the population. Consequently lineage members now define their own share of lineage land with greater accuracy. The nineteenth century refugees flocked to towns in which the whole area of farmland had already been allocated in the traditional manner. They, like the modern migrant or the unfortunate man whose lineage has insufficient land for him to use, sought for small plots of land from those lineage heads who had land to spare. They were expected to shew towards their benefactor most of the traditional forms of allegiance; but in many cases they came from other quarters of the town or even other towns, where they already owed political allegiance to a chief and ruler. The obligations which they owed in respect of their farmland were thus separated from their political obligations. With the decline in these traditional forms of allegiance, many tenants ceased to respect the lineage head from whom they, or their forefathers had received land, and began to assume rights over the land in excess of those originally granted them. In its initial form *ifakɔlɛ* appears to be the commutation of the traditional gifts and services for a single annual,

[1] But I have heard of some cases where, with extreme land shortage, as much as 50 per cent of the annual crop has been demanded.

[2] Palm trees could, in the past, be mortgaged. See WARD-PRICE, par. 69.

compulsory levy, to be paid in kind; it differed little from the traditional payments. With increasing land shortage, the rise of a cash crop economy, and the further disintegration of the traditional social structure, the *ifakɔlɛ* paid in cash has tended to assume more of the characteristics of rent. Conversely, the lineage head or ruler with land to give out to acquaintances and to non-natives of his town has begun to assume the characteristics of a landowner. The high degree of personal relationship between the lineage head and the tenant and the small proportion of the crop paid as *ifakɔlɛ* have changed to more impersonal relationships and higher payments.

In most cases the traditional rights over land are still expressed in their old wording. But since the economy of the country has changed and land is not free for anyone to use but a commodity to be sold or leased the actual meaning of these rights has changed considerably.

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THE ROLLING TARGET (HOOP-AND-POLE) GAME IN AFRICA

Egyptian Accession Rite or Multiple Ritual Symbolism

O. F. RAUM

SYNOPSIS

A "primitive" game is a phenomenon in which are combined at least three factors: material articles, a social organization — the group of players — and rules of action. In addition a fourth factor may be present: a myth which describes the origin or "the idea" of the game. Since modern sociological schools of Social Anthropology are almost exclusively interested in "structural" analyses of social ways and relations, certain areas of "primitive" life — and among them games — have passed out of the focus of attention of anthropologists. This is to be regretted.

This paper is an attempt to investigate the ethnological problems presented by the ubiquitous occurrence of the rolling target game in Africa. In the first section the "surface" features of the game are described: its distribution, the target and missiles, the rules of the game and its function. It soon becomes apparent that the elucidation of the present-day function of the game does not take us very far. A brief discussion of the psychological problems raised by the existence of one and the same game throughout most of Africa follows. The investigation into the world distribution of the game and its analogues reveals that the game is found in other continents and in a very elaborate form in America.

The very detailed descriptions existing for the American form of the game suggest certain lines of research into the ritual meaning of the African game. Evidence is submitted for considering the game a secularised version of an anticipatory hunting ritual, of the charismatic training for hunting in certain initiation rites, of success rites in accession ceremonies and of ancient weather magic.

The frequency with which the game occurs is thus a function of the many interpretations to which a globular moving target and the missiles trained at it lend themselves. The rich symbolical possibilities of the game, rather than radial diffusion from one historical centre of invention, account for its world-wide distribution.

PART I

THE GAME

The Distribution of the Game

In June 1782 the East Indiaman *Grosvenor* was wrecked some miles north of the Umzimvubu river in what is now the north-eastern corner of the Cape Province. In a famous trek, of more than four months, some of the survivors reached Cape Town. The deposition of Hynes, one of the leaders of the stragglers, contains the following statement : "During the march through this nation (the Caffrees), they one day saw a great number of natives (Hynes believes near three hundred) exercising themselves on a fine gradual slope, in throwing the assaygay or lance. Being arranged in two lines on opposite sides of the lawn, one of them rolled with all his strength from the top of the descent a wooden ball, and so expert were they, that in the

passage, they would lodge their lances in it" (Carter, G. A., p. 72).[1]

This game I propose to call the rolling target game (hereafter abbreviated r.t.g.). It consists in throwing a missile at a target which moves or rolls along the ground. It is usually associated with a more or less complicated method of keeping count and may be played by two or more individuals or by organized teams. There are two main variants. In the one, the target is thrown into the air. In the second it is attached to a string and swung round in the circle of players.

Two questions arise: first, is the game still known among the Xhosa, the tribe designated by the term Caffrees? Neither Soga (1936), nor Kropf (1886) reports it. A belief in the survival of culture traits made me look through Kropf's great *Kafir-English Dictionary* (1890). Under the word *uku-gcuntsa* the game is mentioned as a pastime of boys using darts and the bulb of a euphorbia as target. This seems a clear case of the decay of a cultural trait.

The second question is: do other peoples know this remarkable game? In my attempt to establish the distribution of the r.t.g. I have been hampered by not having access to a representative library. Thus the subjoined list is necessarily a tentative one. The game is played by a number of tribes in East Africa. The Chaga play it. Their r.t.g. was described by Ovir in 1896 as: "throwing a lance at a ring" (Ovir 1896, 435, Raum, 1940, 271). It is also known to their neighbours to the south-east, the Gweno of North Pare, and to the west, the Arusha of Mt. Meru. It is played by the Kamba, who live just across the Kenya boundary and are related to a number of Chaga clans (Lindblom, 1920, 423). The game is not mentioned by the Routledges for the Kikuyu, nor is it reported by Hobley or Kenyatta. Roscoe did not observe it among the Ganda, the Geshu or the Kitara. But Kitching saw it in Toro (Kitching, 1917, 224), Dr. Cunnington at Kazagga near Lake Tanganyika and Meyer describe a variant of it in Urundi (Meyer, 1916). When I collected games of East African tribes, the Shambala, Zaramo, and Iramba informants did not mention a game of this nature But it has been observed among non-Bantu tribes. The Elgeyo (Keyo), a "Hamitic" people, play two forms (Massam, 1927, 101) and also the "Nilotic" Lango of Uganda (Driberg, 1923, 130). Although the Elgeyo are related to the Masai, the game has not been reported for this tribe by O. Baumann, Thomson, Merker or Hollis. Nor did Beech note it among the Suk.

In Central Africa the r.t.g. is not unknown. It is true Doke does not mention it for the Lamba, but the Ba-Ila know the swinging target variant (Smith and Dale 1920, II, 242). There is no reference to it in Werner's (1906) description of children's games in Nyasaland. But in the Congo the game is played among the Songe at the upper reaches of the river (Torday and Joyce), among the Ngala (Weeks, 1913, 151), and the Bangi (Yanzi) (Johnston 1908, II, 708), both at the north-west bend. The Kongo, near the river's mouth, know two forms of the game (Bentley, 492) and so do the Ababua, one of the tribes just south of the Bantu line (Halkin, 1911, 127). Schweinfurth (1878, I, 140) noted one variant among the Bongo. That it is well known in West Africa is shown by the Ekoi (Talbot, 1912, 286), the Ibo (Basden, 1921, 127–8) and the Jukun (Meek, 1931, (1), 457).

In South Africa most tribes seem to know the game. It is played by the Lenge and Chopi in Gazaland (Kidd, 1906, 178); the Thonga know two forms (Junod, I, 65), and the Lovedu play it (Krige, 108), so do the Venda (Stayt, 1931, 96; van Warmelo, 1937, *thulwi* and *nitsha*) and the tribes of Shonaland (Bullock, 1928, 203). The Zulu are experts in the game (Speckmann 1876, 122; Bryant, 1905, *intsema*; and *idem*, 1929, 631; Krige, E. J., 1936, 79; von Fintel, 1929, 7) for it is also played in Natal, among the Swazi (Schoeman, 11), the Hlubi (Mzamane) and the Xhosa (Carter, Kropf, (11) *ukugcuntsa*). Casalis does not mention it of the Southern Sotho, nor Brown for the Tswana. Irle in his account of the Herero does not refer to it. But it is played by one of the Hottentot tribes, the Korana (Engelbrecht, 1936, 223). It has not been observed among the Bushman Naron,

[1] Other accounts are by Chiron, Riou, Dalrymple and Hubberley. Cf. also Moodie, D. C. F., Vol. I, p. 144. Recently Professor Kirby has traced the route of he survivors.

whose games have been well described by Bleek.

The inference is, that the r.t.g. is not restricted to one cultural or linguistic group. It is played by the Hottentot Korana and the Hamitic Elgeyo, which are related to Masai and Nandi, by the Nilotic Lango as well as by a great variety of Bantu-speaking peoples and indeed by West African tribes. This wide-spread distribution may be considered a proof of its great age, especially as the game is not, like football, an item of recently introduced western culture.

Targets and Missiles

There is a striking variety in the kinds of targets used: hoop, grass disc, tuber and gourd. A hoop, made of creepers, cane, osier, lianas, and carefully lashed together at the overlap, is the target of Lango, Toro, Chaga, Kamba, Ababua, Rundi and Kazagga. Where its size has been recorded it varies from 8″ to 18″. The Elgeyo employ a "quoit", made of a twig bound with bast. The term implies, and this seems to be supported by their use of a forked stick as a missile, that it is a hoop netted over with bast or grass. However that may be, there is no doubt that the Chopi and Lenge target is a pad of grass about a foot in diameter. The description of the Thonga target agrees with this. The Venda carve a ball from the root of the *dundu* creeper, while a disc-shaped creeper is the Shona target. Stayt in a note on the word *dundu* mentions that it is also a name for a large basket and that the target used in the r.t.g. resembles the basket in appearance. The Thonga woven grass disc shares thus its appearance with the Venda target. But it has its name (*nsema*) in common with the Swazi, Zulu and Gazaland target (*nzema, intsema, dema*). The Nguni target is not the woven disc or hoop but the bulbous root of euphorbias and sansevieras. It is described as wheel-shaped or spherical and weighing up to eight pounds. They are dug out, cut into half, sometimes two or three for an afternoon's game. Whether the more recent Xhosa target (the tuber of the *isi-kolokoto*) is the same as the "wooden ball" observed in 1782 it is impossible to say. The Korana use the bitter melon, and the use of "something like a pumpkin" or the gourd has been reported from Natal. In one form of the r.t.g. played by the Ababua the target is the fruit of a rubber plant. The Ngala and the Bangi cut a disclike piece from the plantain root. The Kongo, however, like the East African tribes, use a hoop.

In most tribes the r.t.g. is called after the target, i.e., by a word denoting wheel, hoop or ball (Ababua : *mbaagui*, hoop and *mee*, rubber ball; Ngala: *nkeka*, wheel; Toro: *nazimuga*, wheel; Shona: *nuri;* Venda: *thulwi*; and Zulu: *intsema*). In as many cases the game is described by combining the name of the target with the infinitive of a verb meaning to stab or spear (Kamba: *kuatha ndia*, to shoot the wheel; Lango: *toto okoto*, to spear the hoop; Swazi: *kugwaza insema*, to spear the tuber; Zulu : *ukuhlaba intsema*, to stab the tuber). This construction also occurs in the Korana name of the r.t.g. in which //*?ei* stands for to throw or stab. The uniformity in the designations for the target in the south (Thonga *nseme*; Swazi *insema*; Zulu *intsema*; Natal and Gazaland *dema*) is a reflexion of the greater linguistic homogeneity of this part of Africa. It is the more surprising as the targets themselves show no resemblance.

The variation in the name is no evidence against a common origin of the r.t.g. For maize, although mainly introduced by the Portuguese, has varied names (Bullock, Wright), while Virginian tobacco bears the same name all over Africa (Schweinfurth). Nor is the variation in the nature of the target an indication of independent invention of the r.t.g. The contrast between the tubers, roots and gourds of the south and the hoops of East and Central Africa is accounted for by the raw material available in the respective vegetation regions. Where banana root disc (Ngala, Bangi) and rubber plant fruit (Ababua) are used, these too are suggested as targets by indigenous plants. This assumption can be pursued in detail in the south, where grass discs are used in the sub-tropical grass lands, tubers of succulents in the rain-shadow areas and gourds in semi-desert regions. Furthermore where the game is played north of the tropical forests, gourds reappear in agreement with the reduplication of vegetation regions north and south of the equator. Thus the Jukun of Northern

Nigeria, like the Natal Natives, play the r.t.g. with a pumpkin.

The missiles used show no less variation. Five main types occur: the lance, the forked spear, bolas, arrows and the thonged stick. Chaga, Lango (in one form of the r.t.g.), Thonga, Swazi, Venda, Shona, Zulu, Xhosa and Ababua use pointed sticks about 5–6 ft. long. They are called spears, wooden assegais, lance (1782), darts, pins, javelins or wands. The Venda cut them from the Cassia tree, the Ngala use bamboo splinters. The Zulu term is *u(lu)–kande*. Among the Korana and Zulu they are burn-pointed, given four flanges (Zulu) and made smooth with resin. The number prepared is in some instances fixed by custom: among the Korana six are made, among the Arusha eight. One of the Elgeyo missiles is a forked stick and the Lovedu use a stick furnished with a circle of points.

The Kongo, Rundi, Lango (second form), Toro and Kamba missile is bolas-like. The most frequent form is a string whose two ends have weights attached, frequently maize cobs, sometimes small pieces of wood. The bolas described by Cunnington from the shores of Lake Tanganyika has three weights, short cylindrical pieces of wood (3¼″ long, ¾″ diameter). They were tied to three effective lengths of string, one of which was longer than the rest. This weight was held in the hand, when the bolas was whirled round before the throw. Bolas are used with hoops and thrown in such a manner, that their weights get entangled in the target and stop its progress. For the same purpose the Lango "dog", a stick 4″ long, has thongs tied to either end.

Arrows are used by the Songe (the one variant) and Ibo in the r.t.g. only. This is astonishing as bow and arrows form a recognized toy among the Chaga and Kamba and elsewhere and Kamba men boast of their bowmanship and the Venda use the bow as their principal weapon.

The uniform equipment in the south holds also for the missiles. With the exception of the Lovedu forked spear, pointed sticks are used throughout. In the east and centre of Africa no such uniformity exists. In the Congo basin darts, spears, sticks, arrows and bolas are used. In the east the bolas predominate. For this reason Harrison asks whether the bolas of the r.t.g. are degenerated forms of the bolas found in palaeolithic sites in East Africa.[1] If this could be shown to be the case the historical continuity of the game itself might be extended thousands of years back, an assumption which one hesitates to make without further evidence.

Little information is available concerning the playing ground. The Chaga clear a sloping field of shrubs and weeds. In 1782 the Xhosa played the game on "a fine gradually sloping lawn". The Swazi prefer a steep slope, while fairly level ground of the size of a cricket pitch is required for the Natal form of the game.

The Rules of the Game

Although informal competitions between individuals have been observed (Chaga, Ababua), the game is usually played by two teams which face each other at a distance of from 10 to 40 yards (Kamba, Ngala, Swazi, Natal, Rundi) or are lined up at right angles. (Elgeyo, Chaga). One team "bowls", i.e. trundles the target. The "fielding" team shoots or throws missiles at it. In the Lango r.t.g. each side is limited to six players. The Korana play the game with three players on each side. In their case a seventh player rolls the target. The teams "change sides", which probably means that they take turns in stabbing. In the account for the Natal r.t.g. it is not clear whether the players are drawn up in about equal teams or one "bowler" only serves the "stabbers". This latter arrangement is the custom in Zululand, where each player "bowls" the target four times in turn.

Among the Swazi and Venda each team has a leader. Among the Chaga each team consists of a headman and commoners, whilst a chief of the game keeps order generally. The headman prepares the hoops, rolls the target and supervises the scoring. The commoners get the sticks ready and throw them at the passing hoop. Such teams may

[1] Harrison, H. S., 1947. The references to the Toro and Kazagga r.t.g. are from this source. The bolas with three weights is chiefly known as a weapon of war and chase among the South American Indians. The Eskimos use a thin thong weighted with two ivory knobs for catching birds. The bolas is known by the Greeks of to-day as a plaything for boys. (Cf. Tylor, E. B., (1) p. 177 ; Gardiner, E. N., p. 313.)

represent districts within a chieftainship, especially is this the case when the game is played by older boys and men. Among the Swazi, too, teams of different districts may challenge one another for a contest and these occasionally degenerate into a fight. The Zulu boys, who play together are contemporaries; the r.t.g. of the small boys is a very simple affair.

The object of the game among the Elgeyo is to hit the "quoit", whereas that of the Thonga is to pierce the grass disc until it is spoilt. The Venda and Shona must transfix the bulb so that it can be lifted from the ground by the missiles. In a game played near Port Shepstone in Southern Natal sixty years ago, the bowler did not touch the target, but piercing it with his stick, hurled it along with the stick in it. Xhosa, Zulu and Natal tribes aim at spearing the target and show no refinement in counting hits. The two Swazi teams throw their marked spears simultaneously. The team which succeeds in lodging the greater number of missiles in the target is the winner. The Korana are more particular. Their target, the wild melon, must be struck in the middle. If the stick strikes the rind or merely grazes it, the throw is not counted. The Ngala, on the other hand, consider that throw the most "fatal" (valued ?) in which the rim of the disc is struck. The stick of the Ababua and the bola-like missiles must be thrown in such a manner that they stop the target in its course either by pinning it to the ground or by becoming entangled in the hoop.

When the hoop is brought down by the bolas thrown in the Toro r.t.g., the thrower of the hoop passes from his side to that of the successful throwers. Some games show two definite stages. The Kamba bolas must not become entangled, but must pass through the hoop without touching it. When this happens, the successful player "goes over to the opposing side and from there tries to throw his missile through the wheel when it is sent back by his own side". The Lango use different missiles for the two stages. When the hoop has been stopped by the thonged stick of a player of team *A*, a player of team *B* takes up his stance at the place where it was stopped, and throws his lance at the target, winning a point for his team, if he hits it and losing it to team *A*, if he misses. In the Bangi r.t.g., as the plantain root travels along the ground "assegais are thrown at it and eventually — presumably after it has been stopped — the players stand at a distance from the place where it rests and take aim at it". Among the Chaga the hoop is set rolling by team *A*. When it has been pinned down by the pointed sticks of team *B*, the hoop now becomes a stationary target for team *A* which throws the missiles from the very point the target has been stopped by team B.[1]

For most tribes there is no record of how the count is kept. In the case of Chaga, Korana and Ngala the score varies according to the place in which the target is hit. The Chaga notch the score into their sticks individually. The score of the "fielding" team is cut into the hoop itself. As the scores vary—throws where the lances land within the circle of the hoop count little, those which hit the hoop itself more, the highest score, often 100, being given for a hit in the overlap — one would expect that different notches must be used. But I have no information on this point. The Korana way of scoring, as described by a native, is not clear: "If they *all three* (of the fielding team) missed, they used to take a small stone and put it aside in order to be able to tell how often *a person* had missed." Count is kept for both sides among the Elgeyo. The Zulu players make notches into their sticks for successful throws, or the successful "stabber" is shifted one up the line of players in which he is standing. When he has reached the top, he is very proud. The Swazi, however, place the best player at the bottom of the slope where the target rolls fastest. In Natal the player who hits the target bowls it in the next bout. Because of the two stages in the Lango r.t.g. a point scored with the thonged missile may be cancelled by a successful throw with the spear by the opposing team. If the points do not cancel each other, the balance is carried forward. In some

[1] There are many local variations in the Chaga rules. According to some informants the hoop may not be used as a stationary target, if it has been pinned down by more than one spear, or if the dart that stopped the hoop does not stick up in the ground but falls flat.

tribes a definite winning score is known: in Arusha it is hundred points, the Thonga declare that team the winner which destroys the grass disc.

The Function of the Game

With regard to the function of the r.t.g. in the tribal system, Africans declare it to be a war game (Chaga), since it gave practice in throwing the spear accurately. The Lovedu recognize it" as training in hunting and exactness of aim". Similar statements have been made by the Ngala, Swazi and Lango, where Driberg maintains that the game trains swiftness of hand and eye and is eminently useful as a preparation for the work of huntsman and warrior. In 1876 Speckmann stated that the Zulu considered "stabbing the tuber" as part of their military training — it was a few years before the Zulu War of 1879. Boys of five or six years began to practise with the throwing spear and those who did well were designated by a special term (*i-zana-nkanda*). As they did not practise at a stationary target but only at the leaping tuber, the Zulus' skill was prodigious. It is said that adults never missed their mark at a distance of 50 to 60 paces. (Yet Junod mentions a historical instance where a chief missed.) According to Kidd the men encouraged the game and gave the boy who speared the target first the first, choice of meat — a coveted distinction. Speckmann's explanation is not satisfactory, for when he wrote, the main weapon of the Zulu had been the short stabbing spear for 50 years. The retention in the r.t.g. of a weapon which is thrown can be explained in two ways: first by the necessities of the chase, — and indeed my informants maintain that the game teaches to stab a fast moving buck—and secondly by assuming that an outdated mode and weapon of war was continued as a children's game.

Another strong motive, that of seeking amusement and enjoyment in concerted play may be readily granted. This remark applies not only to the game as played by boys to-day. The reports of the great number of players and onlookers in the Chaga and Xhosa games of the past show that the r.t.g. was a sports event. Its primary attraction, if viewed in this light, seems to be the testing of individual skill, the competition of teams and — in those instances where bolas are used — the handling of a missile which is not of immediate practical use. Some reports accordingly speak of the enthusiasm and excitement which the game occasions. The Ngala and Chaga boys dream for days of their feats and they give stirring accounts of their exploits in the r.t.g. to their parents. Thonga boys are so absorbed in their *nsema* that they forget their herds and do not heed the bell calling them to school. The observation that the Lango players are not interested in keeping the score or even in the question who are the victors is thus probably true of many other tribes. The boys are "engrossed in the game for its own sake".

The scanty historical evidence establishing the game for the Xhosa in 1782, for the Zulu in 1876 and the Chaga in 1897 and indicating that then the game was played in great contests seems to show that there was an efflorescence of interest in the game in those days. The elaboration of the rules in the case of the Chaga and Lango r.t.g. and the existence of two or more forms of the game in other tribes point in the same direction. Too little is known of the history of the game to say whether the interest fluctuated for reasons inherent in all cultural activities or because of the influence of tribal wars and contact with whites. A suggestion may be made for the decline of the r.t.g. among the Xhosa, for among all the tribes enumerated as playing the game, it is perhaps the one whose tribal and political cohesion suffered most through the wars of the 19th century. The disappearance of the game may be causally connected with these events. For the Zulu a similar fading away has been noted. A white friend of mine who played the game with Zulu boys in the Kranzkop District before the first world war, says that it is little met with nowadays. Yet this apparent decay may be an inference from non-observation. I am satisfied that the interest taken in the game by the Zulu is out of proportion to the scant attention paid to it by white observers.

The two variants of the r.t.g. seem to have been "invented" to increase the difficulties of the game and thus to enhance its value as a target practice and to heighten its sporting appeal. In the one variant, the target is attached to a string and dragged

past the "fielding" side. In the other, the target is thrown into the air. The connexion between the r.t.g. and the swinging target game is evident among the Thonga. There the disc used in the r.t.g. is sometimes tied to a string made of fibres and thongs. The owner of the "little elephant", as the disc is called, drags it past the players, trying all the while to dodge their spears. In so doing he has the right to strike the "hunters" and to persue them. If the disc is stabbed, or if the hunters snatch it away from its owner, "the little elephant" is vanquished. The Ila swinging target game is similarly described, the target used being a large seed pod of a certain tree. Schweinfurth, who described the Bongo swinging variant of the r.t.g., noted that the target, made of soft wood, is swung round by a man running inside a circle of men armed with sticks. When it is struck and falls to the ground, the successful marksman is cheered. The resemblance of the swinging target game with a phase of the Kongo r.t.g. is noticeable. When the hoop has been caught by the bola-like missile, the successful player seizes the bolas by its free end and whirls the hoop round his head. Or he is challenged to "eat the fowl", i.e., to whirl the hoop in the vertical plane and to jump over it without allowing it to touch the ground.

A number of tribes practise both the rolling of the target and the throwing of it in the air. The two games have different names: Kongo: rolled, *lungungu*; thrown, *mbembe*; Lango: rolled, *toto okoto*; thrown, *chobo awala*. In the Lango flying t.g. the thonged sticks have to pass through the hoop in flight. So fast is the game, that it is often difficult to say whether the missile passed through the hoop or not. In some tribes, e.g., the Rundi, only the flying target is known. In the Elgeyo game the hoop or disc is first thrown into the air and shooting starts as it falls to the ground. The Songe follow similar rules. The arrows they use are made of the mid-rib of banana leaves, their flying target being ball-like. The Ibo of Nigeria play a more complex game. The young men shoot notched unbarbed arrows from a bow whose string is made of the fibre of the creeper cane. The target is a piece of banana stem which is thrown a distance of ten paces. Shooting starts as the target touches the ground. The player who pierces it first throws the target in the next bout. The Ekoi in South Nigeria play the flying target game, called *egele*, in the following form: the ball is made by tying young maize leaves together. A player of team *A* throws it into the air. Team *B* attempts "to lasso it by means of a tie-tie looped into a slip-knot". The catching of a thrown target in this manner is also known among the Ababua.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the survey of the r.t.g. in Africa one or two psychological assumptions were made. It was said (1) that the variations in the kind of missiles and targets used could be explained as local adaptations of the general pattern of the game. This would imply that among African devotees of the game such an ability to make use of local raw material exists. (2) The second assertion concerned the variants of the r.t.g which were explained as having been devised to enhance the practice and competition value of the game. This too implies inventive ability. (3) The third and most important psychological problem is, of course, whether it can be assumed that the particular combination of rolling or moving target and missile throwing characteristic of the r.t.g. could have arisen independently in various parts of Africa. In a very extensive research into play activities especially of East African children, I have come to the conclusion, that such a combination lies within the inventive powers and the cultural interests of Africans. (The evidence arranged in games of increasing complexity, the steps being very gradual, is too voluminous to be published in this paper.)

However, when all is said on behalf of the inventive ability of the African, the problem remains, whether the peculiar employment of the r.t.g. in certain ritual situations to be described presently, can be due to a universally active genius of combination following similar paths in many localities. Without anticipating the results of this investigation it seems plausible to assume (a) that a recurrent employment of the r.t.g. in the same ritual of several peoples or tribes offers a *prima facie* in-

stance of historical diffusion, or (b) that such a recurrence indicates a very general, or perhaps even universal, instance of ritual symbolism. To substantiate either the one or the other of these possibilities further investigations must be carried out. I shall turn to instances of the game in other continents, with the hope of receiving clues from them for a more intense analysis of the African forms of the game.

WORLD DISTRIBUTION OF THE R.T.G.

Oceania

To obtain a broader basis for any generalization on the independent invention or diffusion of the r.t.g., its world distribution should be studied. The r.t.g. is known in Oceania and in Australia. In Australia "on the Bloomfield and in Victoria the men practise with spears at a disc of bark or the top of a *zamia* (a nut, an important article of their diet) which was rolled down a clear[ed] space" (Thomas, 1906, 139). Other ball games described for the Australians do not fall within our definition of the r.t.g.[1] In Polynesia the throwing of the reed spear is, or rather was, the national game. It was known in Fiji and the Sandwich Islands (Deane, 1921, 15; Ellis, vol. IV, 197). The game trains the performer to drive the spear with force and accuracy in fighting and fishing. But apparently no target or mark was used and the competition was for distance only. Among the Maori the variant of the r.t.g. in which the hoop or ring is thrown and caught in the air was noted long ago (Ratzel, 1896, I, 76).

In Melanesia and New Guinea the r.t.g. is known to at least two tribes. The Mufulu of British New Guinea play the game in the following manner: the boys prepare spears; then they stand in a row whilst another boy rolls in front of them a ball made out of the root of a banana plant with its many rootlets intertwined. The boys try to hit it with their spears as it passes them. A similar game is played at Mekee and at the coast. (Williamson, 225–6). But there the ball is made of the fibres of the coco-nut. In this manner the target would obtain the appearance of a netted wheel or disc as in some forms of the South African r.t.g. The Mufulu boys, although they use arrows in other games, do not employ them in shooting at the moving target. On the Melanesian islands the game has been observed in Dobu. Fortune (1932, 290) describes it as a game of piercing rolling sections of banana tree stems with spears. It goes by the name of *keno kinoki*. A legend or myth is told of the game in which it is said to be played by the Children of the Sky who use the Pleiades as their (rolling) target and one of the children succeeds in opening a shell of Pleiades' armband through a skilful shot.[2]

Asia

The hypothetical connecting thread between the African and Oceanic r.t.g. — the geographical bridge Asia — did not yield the game in the few and unrepresentative books which I could consult.[3] In the survey of Malay games given in the *J.R.A.I.*, vol. 33 (1903), pp. 284–304 the r.t.g. is not mentioned. But we find the myth of the shooting at celestial bodies in the spell of the Malay wizard: "Om. I loose my shaft, I loose it and the moon clouds over, I loose it and the sun is extinguished, I loose it and the stars burn dim. But it is

[1] Spencer, B. and Gillen, F. J., *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899), Howitt, A. W., *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (1904), Spencer, B., *The Arunta* and *idem*, *Native Tribes of the Northern Territories of Australia* (1914) do not mention amusements, games, play, toys or sports in their index. But Howitt (1904, 770) describes a ball game (the ball being sown of oppossum skin or kangaroo scrotum) in which totem clans or moieties compete, the object of the game being to keep the ball in the air. Horne, G., and Aiston, G., although mentioning a game where clay balls are made to hit each other, do not describe a r.t.g.

[2] In a symposium on children's games in New Guinea, published in the *J.R.A.I.* for 1908, no mention is made of a r.t.g., although the children of Elema at the Papuan Gulf play shooting at coco-nuts and at a buried target which might be considered derived forms of the r.t.g. Malinowski does not mention any children's games in Argonauts of the Western Pacific. Nor is the r.t.g. found among the ritual games of the Kai (New Guinea) (Keysser) or the Kayan, Borneo (Nieuwhaus).

[3] Hutton, J. H., *The Sema Nagas* and *idem*, *The Angams Nagas*; C. von Führer-Haimendorf, *The Naked Nagas* (1939); V. Elwin, *The Baiga* (Central Provinces) (1939); Hatch, W. J., *The Land Pirates of India:* Russel, R. V., *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (4 vols., 1916 ff.); Bell, C., *The People of Tibet.*

not the sun, the moon and the stars that I shoot at, it is the stalk of the heart of that child of the congregation, So-and-so. Cluck! Cluck! soul of So-and-so, come and walk with me... " (Skeat, 1900, 574.)[1] Here the shooting at celestial bodies appears as the privilege of the magician who achieves with it great effects, the clouding over of the sky (rain ?), the darkening of the sun (eclipse ?) and the capture of a human soul. The spell — this seems important — must be spoken at sunrise or sunset.

Whatever the geographical or historical reasons for this almost complete absence of the r.t.g. in Asia — it may of course be due to the fallacy of non-observation — even Egypt, the focal point of three continents apparently knows of a game which only to some extent resembles the moving t.g. It is the so-called *gereed* in which players on horse back throw sharp sticks or darts at one another with such force that fatal wounds may result (Lane, 1904, II, 46 *seq.*). The feature that human beings may be used as targets will recur in other instances of the r.t.g. to be discussed presently. If an excursus to ancient Egypt may be allowed at this stage, a hoop game was known there. The paintings at Beni Hassan show two hoop players with three hieroglyphics representing an eagle, a loop and an owl. Wilkinson suggests that the game consisted in two players "endeavouring to snatch from each other a small hoop by means of hooked rods, probably of metal, and the success of a player seems to have depended on extricating his own from the adversary's rod and then snatching up the hoop before he had time to stop it" (Wilkinson, 1890, I, 195). This seems to be a naïve interpretation of the scene depicted. With the knowledge of the various forms of the r.t.g. in mind one cannot but interpret the picture differently. The two players, each bending forward and holding a crooked stick, remind one of the forked missile of the Lovedu and Elgeyo and similar crossed or crooked poles in the American r.t.g. There the crook serves to break the speed of the hoop and to bring about its falling on the stick in a manner which secures a high count. If such an interpretation is acceptable, the Beni Hassan players are the earliest experts of the r.t.g. known.

North America

Even if allowance be made for the difference in the intensity with which North American Indians have been observed for five centuries as contrasted with the scant attention given to African tribes and the romantic interest shown to the South Sea Islanders, one is amazed at the vast collection of games of chance and dexterity made by Culin. His collection reveals that the r.t.g. (called hoop-and-pole game by the American ethnographers after one of its main forms) is one of the most popular of the American Indians, far more popular indeed than lacrosse. It is recorded of almost 100 out of 221 tribes listed and is found in its various manifestations from Mexico to the Arctic Circle and from the South East to the North West with its main development in the Plains and the South West. Its variant, the ring-and-pin game, is mentioned for 42 out of the total of tribes. Nor does Culin's gigantic labour, the result of fifteen years' work, seem to be exhaustive, since the Maricopa, for instance, whom he does not mention in his list, have since been recorded as knowing the game (Lowie, 1934, 165).

The diameter of the target varies in size from 2½″ (Paiute) to 25″ (Oglala). In its commonest form it is a hoop netted over, the counts depending on the particular mesh pierced. In other forms there is no net but cord spokes or an inner ring attached by cords to the outer hoop. Occasionally the target is a small ring with beads of various colours attached. A number of hoops are smooth-rimmed but others have the "four quarters of the sky" indicated upon them or bear symbols of birds, stars, crescents, etc. The material of the hoops varies as much as its form. Saplings are lashed with rawhide or twined with cord, bark or beads. In some cases rings are made of maize husks. A few stone rings are mentioned as targets. The groove ornaments engraved on them point to their having

[1] In Skeat, W. W. and Bagden, C. O., the r.t.g. is not mentioned. But in vol. I, p. 64 the twirling of pegs aimed to strike and stick in a rival's arm is described as a contest for the favours of a girl. It has certain features in common with the r.t.g.

been derived from the cloth or buckskin wrapped ring.

An equally bewildering variety of missiles is used. Arrows are either shot or thrown by hand; simple shafts and long poles are common, feather darts weighted by maize cobs occur among some tribes and others use sticks with a forked end. In a few tribes two darts tied to each other by a length of thong are thrown and throwing sticks with arcs and cross-bows for hooking the hoop are not unknown. Occasionally a number of short thongs are attached to them at equidistant points and then the count is determined by the position of the fallen hoop upon these rings or the number of thongs that are caught in the ring.

The game is usually played by men only, although reports of boys and even women playing it exist. In general the game is played by two competitors, but team play and matches between different communities or clans are on record. Especially in those forms where a long pole and a small or beaded ring are used, the object is to throw the missile at the moment when the ring falls and in such a way that the high mark on the ring falls upon the pole, or the ring comes to rest on a high mark of the pole. To facilitate this the hoop is sometimes driven against a barrier or into a heap of hay, or the players run with the hoop and shoot when it begins to wobble.

The playing field was occasionally specially prepared. We hear of clay pavements and timbered floors and the refinement of seats for the spectators. The records about the season when the game was played are scanty. The first observations of the game date back to the 17th century: In 1698 Boyagoula saw the game being played at the mouth of the Mississippi by one of the Muskogean tribes (Culin, 485). Periods of efflorescence and decay are reported for the 18th century. Great rousing contests, with the whole populace of a district looking on and eagerly betting on the outcome, alternate with periods of slackness and threatening extinction. In one pathetic instance an old man is known to have taught his grandchild lest the game be forgotten altogether. But decay was not necessarily followed by extinction, it might lead on to a vigorous revival.

In determining the origin and meaning of the game Culin (1907) sketchily discusses three possibilities: (1) that the games are divinatory experiments. For the particular case of the hoop-and-pole games this explanation is abandoned (p. 35) but reasserted in general terms for all games of chance and skill later (p. 809). (2) That the games are ceremonies to propitiate the gods and to secure certain gifts from them such as fertility, rain, life and health. The evidence given in support of this is that the implements of the game are frequently offered on the altars of the gods, especially the Twin Gods of War among the Zuñi. (3) That the game expresses a myth. Culin adopts this last explanation, for it makes possible the reduction to mythological terms of the implements used in the hoop-and-pole games but also of those of all other games of chance and dexterity.[1] Accordingly Culin identifies the missiles as the arrows of the Twin Gods of War and the hoop as their netted shield. But in another context the hoop is interpreted as the spider's web, the charm owned by the Grandmother of the Twins, i.e., a magical and not a physical means of protection. Apart from this inconsistency it may be doubted whether Culin has not been carried away by his sweeping assumption that "behind both ceremonies and games must be *one* wide-spread myth from which both derived their impulse" (p.32). Moreover, he fails to show that this mythological explanation is valid for all forms of the r.t.g. in America. The connexion of the myth with the game is shown to exist for the Zuñi only!

Dissatisfaction with Culin's summary explanation is increased when we consider the divergent evidence he so assiduously collected to determine how far the American r.t.g. served purposes of divination or the magic of hunting and fertility. Here the American evidence is more definite and clear cut than is the African.

To use the r.t.g. for divination Indian tribes do

[1] Culin distinguishes among games of chance: (a) Dice games; (b) Guessing games (Stick game, Hand game, Four-stick game, Hidden ball game); and among games of dexterity: (a) Archery; (b) Sliding javelins; (c) Hoop-and-pole; (d) Ring-and-pin; (e) Ball games; and (f) Racing games.

not shoot, stab or hit the target but try to achieve such a super-imposition of falling hoop and pole that oracular readings may be taken therefrom. For this purpose the hoop is frequently supplied with beads on the inside of its rim, or both hoop and pole are painted with rings or notched or supplied with thongs so that they get entangled in varying combinations. In this way differences in the valuation of hits are achieved. The most usual interpretation of these markings on the hoop is that they represent the four quarters of the sky, the rim forming the horizon (Dakota, p. 503–4). Culin points out in this connexion, that the hoop of the American r.t.g. shows similarities to the Indian conjuror's hoop, the gaming circuit of the dice games and the wheel of the Sun Dance of the Plains tribes. This wheel is explained by Dorsey as a symbol of the sun and its rim or band as the water snake, but also the earth, sky, water or wind. In the origin myth of this wheel the maker places Four-Old-Men at the cardinal points and between them the celestial bodies: sun, moon and the various constellations.[1]

The fact that the American r.t.g., like the African, has two definite stages is probably connected with the use of the hoop as a divinatory object. In the first stage the target must be stopped in its course. In the second the shots which are counted are scored on the stationary target by the player or team that first bowled the target. The Takulli, Seneca, Tuscarora and Klamath thus play the r.t.g. as do the Chaga, Lango, Kamba and Bangi. When the disc has been stopped in the Takulli r.t.g., it is set up upon a little stick and shot at. The roller of the hoop among the Klamath tries to dislodge the arrow of player who succeeded in stopping the hoop (pp. 460, 476–80).

With regard to the anticipatory value of the American r.t.g. the point can be made, that success in the game secured to the victor success in chase or war. Among the Dakota the game was played to secure success in buffalo hunting, among the Oglala of Dakota in elk hunting. The Kiowa warriors purchased the privilege of throwing darts at the ring to derive auguries for success or failure (pp. 478, 483, 503, 505). Frequently the r.t. is identified with the quarry, commonly the buffalo. In consequence the hoop may be either tied with buffalo hide (Pawnee, 486–9) or the use of buffalo hide or deer skin is tabooed for this use (Dakota, Yankton, 509). In one case (Dakota 503) the hoop is said to represent the horns of the buffalo and the supporting skull bone.

A successful hit may be described as "wounding" the target (Omaha 514) and the centre of the target may be known as the "heart" (Dakota, Oglala, 507). The holes formed by the lacing of the wheel may have different sizes and correspondingly different values and names, such as buffalo bull, buffalo cow, buffalo calf, wolf, coyote, etc. (Grosventres, 446). Accordingly the game may be called "buffalo game" or "elk game" (Cheyenne, Dakota, 446, 503–7) and the magical purpose of the game may be "to call" buffalo or even to "produce" them (Arapaho, 443; Pawnee, 468; Dakota-Teton, 508). Consequently we find that the origin myths of the game repeatedly recount the miraculous transformation of the wheel into buffalo or of the quarry into the instruments of the game (Arapaho, 443 ; Arikara, 462; Pawnee 468). Or else buffalo are said to have played the game themselves or to have given instructions to man as to its rules (Omaha, 514; Pawnee, 468–9; Dakota-Yankton, 509).

The idea that by shooting the hoop buffalo are magically produced fuses with the other that the instruments of the game represent buffalo. The result is that the hoop may be interpreted as the symbol of the sex organ of a buffalo cow and the hoop may then have to be made from the vulva of such an animal. In equal manner the stick or pole thrown or pushed into the ring is explained as the penis of the bull and the poles may be carved with a knob at the end (Pawnee, 488–9). This motif is extended in stories of players of the game being married to buffalo wives (Arikara, 462; Wichita, 471; Omaha, 514).

The idea of productiveness may also be generalized into the employment of the game for calling forth vegetal fertility. Thus the Zuñi frequently

[1] This recalls the parallel representation of the world in the divination bowls (and baskets) elsewhere. Cf. Frobenius, L., p. 168–73 ; Stayt, H., p. 291 ff. ; Bent, J. T., p. xvi ; Raum, O. F., (ii), p. 189.

play a flying target game with a ball made of *yucca* exudations in order to produce rain. "The first to penetrate it, lifts it by the dart and, drawing breath from it, offers thanks to the gods that the rains are soon to come" (Zuñi, 527). This rite is probably associated with the ritual shooting of feather darts at cloud symbols which is practised by all "cliff-dwellers", and with the mythological notion of the water sieve of the cloud deities. Here the idea that shooting of arrows at clouds is productive of rain and thus fertility is obvious. But in the shooting of arrows into the sky from the circle of dancers (e.g., in the Sun Dance of the Plains tribes) the action seems to be perpetuated without awareness of its importance as a means of reproductive magic (425, 435).

We find thus in America the link between r.t.g. and ritual piercing of cloud and sky which was already noted in Melanesia and which, as we shall presently show, exists also in Africa. Such an association leads to the identification of sky or celestial bodies with the target. The game in its magical application may thus be performed in order to obtain plant food through causing rain. In this weather magic women are allowed to take part, being the tillers of the ground. This is exemplified in the Zuñi shooting at the crops. The emphasis however lies on the production of the meat supply (hunting magic) and this explains why the game is almost exclusively played by men.

Considering the close connexion between hunting magic and war magic it is not surprising that in the American r.t.g. references to fighting and capture occur. In some origin myths the game is represented as being played for human stakes, the cruel divine gambler winning the lives of all his opponents except that of the human hero (Navaho, 459; Wichita, 471). In the tradition of some of the tribes it is said that the game was played with strangers during migrations, the winning side being given the right to kill the defeated opponents (Akirara). This seems not to have been a mere myth. Human corpses were used as targets by the Pawnee in two authenticated instances (1777–8) and the scene is recorded in a Dakota pictograph. Possibly the *chungkee* yards of the Muskogee were connected with the use of a human being as a target; they had two upright poles, one carrying an object which served as a target very much like a popinjay, the other was ornamented with the skull of enemies. Among the Thompson Indians the human target appears in a peculiar form. A boy who had been unlucky in play and lost all his arrows could regain them by offering his own back as target. Every arrow that hit him became his property (Arikara, 462; Dakota, 506; Muskogee, 487; Thompson, 492).

THE SYMBOLIC VALUE OF THE MOVING TARGET IN HUNTING RITES

The evidence

The study of the r.t.g. in America has given a lead for further examining the African r.t.g. It was found that the American target could either represent the quarry or the sky (and sun) and thirdly the earth itself bounded by the circular horizon. If we wish to grasp the deeper significance of the r.t.g. in Africa, we must now see whether similar identifications occur here. As long as we consider the r.t.g. from the point of view of invention as a merely psychological phenomenon, the tendency to anthropomorphize or zoomorphize the target remains unimportant. Thus Groos (1901, 114) argues: "that the consciousness of the fact that the target is a symbol of an opponent or of prey hardly forms any considerable element in the satisfaction derived from sport". For this reason Groos classes games of shooting at a mark — he does not mention the r.t.g. — with games exhibiting the psychological tendency of experimenting with one's own body and foreign bodies rather than with the fighting games and he argues that even from the biological view, the concentration and the swiftness of reaction in these games does not necessarily involve "belligerency".

However, even the rather meagre reports on the African r.t.g. indicate that there is in it a definite tendency at work to interpret the instruments of the game as symbols. The most obvious symbol used is that of identifying the target with the quarry. (We shall see later, that the target may also

be a symbol of the earth, the sun, moon or sky and even the human body itself.) Such identification of the target with animals of the chase is customary with the Lango who call the thonged stick dog (*gwok*) "because its duty is to hunt the hoop". Among the Kongo the same identification of the bolas with a dog occurs. It there goes by the Bantu term *mbwa*. Whether the absence of similar zoomorphic terms for sticks and spears is significant, it is impossible to say considering the nature of our evidence.

The identification of the target with animals is more widespread. Among the Bangi the disc must "be wounded", and in the chants of the Ngala the phrase occurs: "Die like a gazelle." The Thonga call their target "little elephant". The shouts uttered by the Chaga teams, viz., "he-goat" and "our cow" suggest that the hoop represents a domestic animal. The pretence is kept up in scoring: the boys count how many goats they won and a shot in the overlap counts 100 head of cattle. As the object of intertribal raids was the capture of domestic animals, the Chaga identification fits our hypothesis, although admittedly cattle which had been stabbed to death would be of no use to primitive raiders.

It is possible that this identification of target with domestic or wild animals is little more than a metaphor. Such a linguistic device is used for many games. For instance the famous board game often represents a cattle raid or a hunt (Stayt, 364; Junod, H., vol. I, 345–9).[1] Yet it is conceivable that the metaphorical employment of words like dog, elephant, gazelle, cattle for missile and target of the r.t.g. has a deeper significance.

This assumption is strengthened by a Zulu story, which perhaps unknown to most r.t.g. players strikingly supplies a mythological background and charter. The story is of Bahu, a mighty hunter (*sic*) of the Mpukunyoni clan, who fell in love with beautiful Nomlingo. As other wooers — foremost among whom was Mfisi — had cattle to offer as bride-price, the girl's father, a chief, insisted that Bahu "must excel all rivals in wrestling, hurling (stabbing the tuber) and running, or never be my son-in-law". A tourney was accordingly arranged, where all the men desirous of the fair prize took part. In the wrestling bout Bahu threw all the others to the ground. Then the rolling target was called for. As it trundled swiftly down the slope, each poised his assegai to stab or fail. But at this very moment, a duiker-buck dashed from its cover athwart the lines. Mfisi grazed it, but Bahu with steadier aim sent his blade into the leaping duiker's lungs. Bahu also succeeded in outrunning Mfisi in the race up the slope of a hill (Bryant, (ii), 630–1; Turnbull, 59; Schoeman, P. J. (ii)).

For the present certain interesting implications of the story will be ignored and attention directed to the surprizing replacement of target (tuber) by quarry. Since the story is associated with the game, it supplies to it a magical and ritual significance and suggests that it does not refer to a unique historical event but to a magical practice through which luck in the chase was anticipated by success in the target stabbing game. In short, it may be presumed that the ritual performance of the r.t.g. probably was employed in Africa — as it was in America — to predetermine the outcome of a hunt or raid.

The r.t.g. as hunting magic

At this stage we shall briefly examine whether the African r.t.g. was used — as the Amerindian evidence and Bahu's story suggest — as a rite of homoeopathic magic on the frequently described pattern of hunters preparing for the chase by injuring or piercing the image of an animal (Frazer: *The Magic Art*, I, p. 55 ff.). Here we meet with disappointment. For although many Bantu peoples were obviously keenly interested in the chase, descriptions of hunting magic of African peoples almost exclusively record only rites which are concerned with the treatment of the quarry *after* it has been killed.[2] The few magical observances *before* the hunt refer mainly to omens and taboos, the preparation of amulets and talismans, the magical treatment of weapons, the taking of medicines, the making of incisions on the hunter's

[1] Klamroth, however, connects the board game with the myth of the swallowing monster.

[2] Cf. Lamba: Doke, 321; Venda: Stayt, 76 ff.; Ila: Smith & Dale, I, 153–69, and II, 4; Pondo: Hunter, 95; Korana: Engelbrecht, 86–9; Pygmies: Schebesta, 66–8, 204–5; Khoi-San: Schapera: Bushman, 138–40; Hottentot, 304–5; Nyasa: Werner, 185 ff.; Ganda: Roscoe, 445 ff.; Kitara: Roscoe, 315–22.

body and the engagement of a lucky person. For evidence of the anticipatory destruction of the (pictorial or plastic) image of game one has, generally speaking, to go either to prehistoric peoples or to American and Australian tribes (Obermaier, 1924, 260–4; Kühn 1929, *passim*; Murphy, 215). From such evidence as we find in the caves of prehistoric men — where pictures of animals are drawn with arrow heads painted in their bodies, or have arrow marks and arrows lying at their feet, indicating that they had been shot at the engravings — it can be safely concluded that the practices of the primitive hunters of to-day closely resemble the magical rites of their prehistoric colleagues.[1]

In the absence of similar evidence for Bantu tribes the following observation seems important. In the forest region between Kasai and Luebo Frobenius' 1905 expedition was once short of meat. The explorer suggested to some Pygmies accompanying him to shoot an antelope. They replied that this could not be done without suitable preparations. These consisted in a rite carried out at sunrise next day. The Pygmy men cleared a spot in the bush and one of them drew with his finger an antelope in the sand while others were reciting a spell. When the sun rose, one of the men stood ready with his bow and arrows. As the rays of the sun touched the picture, the Pygmy women attending uttered some unintelligible sounds and made groping movements towards the sun, while the man shot his arrow into the antelope's neck. In the afternoon the hunters returned with a buck killed by a shot in the neck artery. Next morning the Pygmies went back to the picture in the cleared circle of bush to pour some blood and hairs of the buck into it, to remove the arrow which had remained stuck in the ground, and finally to efface the drawing. All this was done at sunrise, lest the blood of the antelope would destroy the hunters. In this rite the picture stands for the animal, and similarly identified are the arrow and the rays of the sun. But it should be noted that the sun not only helps to take the antelope's life, he seems also to restore it and thus to remove the danger of revenge from the hunters. Frobenius' observation is corroborated by Lebzelter, whom an old prospector in South West Africa told that he had seen *!kung* Bushmen before they go on a hunt draw in the sand the outlines of the animal to be hunted. After various ceremonies they shoot an arrow at the drawing, believing that the animal will be struck in the same part of the body which is hit in the drawing (Frobenius, 1933, 127; Lebzelter, 1934, 33 and 62).

In a similar manner the Kalahari Bushmen hold dances before a "war" during which they shoot small poison-tipped arrows in the direction of their enemy or *towards the sun*, believing that his shadow or soul is thereby killed. And a South West African Bushman, when afraid of an enemy, shoots small arrows into all directions of the horizon, uttering spells and believing, that in this manner he secures himself against his machinations. The Bushmen understandably do not willingly part with their outfit — the so-called Bushmen revolver — lest their enemies get hold of it and retaliate. (Dornan, 1925, 139). The only Bantu custom, known to me, which suggests the same underlying notion of magically anticipating the outcome of a hunt or war-like enterprise is reported of the Zulu. Speckman remarks in 1876 (p. 125), that the Zulu preparations for a tribal hunt and for war were the same. Before the decision to declare war was taken a hunt was carried out whose results were considered of prognostic value in assessing the chances of the contemplated raid.[2]

We may pursue our quest into the magically significant symbolical employment of the target from another angle. The Kasai Pygmy rite suggests that the sun had to be propitiated before the hunt. This may be done for two closely associated reasons: First, the sun can help in killing the animal. But since he must be propitiated to do so, he may also be conceived as controlling the life of game and thus become identified with it. The sun's assistance

[1] Tylor, E. B., *Researches*, 1878, 118 ff.; he quotes Collins: *New South Wales*, (1789), I, 569; Schoolcraft, 1851, I, 372, 380 ff. and II, 180; Charlevoix, 1744, VI, 88. See also Sollas, W. J., *Ancient Hunters*, 412–22, quoting Cushing, 1883, 1886, 1887, 1896 and 1904 (Zuñi) and Hoffmann, W. J. (Ojibera).

[2] The similarity between preparations for hunting and for war account for some of the war scares in Natal in the middle of last century. Its general occurrence in magical practice is discussed in Hubert & Mauss, (i).

in hunting and his role in hunting magic is explained by the fact that, because of the hunter's primitive weapons, it may become necessary for him to run the quarry down, after it has been wounded. In such circumstances the sun becomes an ally of the hunter. If his rays beat down mercilessly the animal will get exhausted soon. If it is hidden behind the clouds the animal may get away. The following statement of a Bushman illustrates the point: "Therefore I chase it (the hare) in the sun, that the sun may, burning, kill it for me, that I may eat it dead from the sun; while I feel, that I was the one who chased it (when) it went along in fear of me" (Bleek & Lloyd, 1911, 311). Consequently, when the Bushmen pursue an antelope they attempt to drive it over sand, the heat of which would make the hooves come off which hastens capture.

But the sun may also represent the hunted animal. In the Kasai Pygmy rite the women grope towards the sun in a manner analogous to the shooting of the hunter at the animal picture in the cleared circle of the bush. The sun, having the quarry's blood and hair sacrificed to him, also revives the quarry again. Apparently he may be viewed as both the quarry and something more than the quarry, say its producer or originator. However that may be, the identification of the quarry with the sun is significant because it suggests that the target in the r.t.g. may in certain circumstances be ritually representing the sun, the more so as its globular or disc-like shape predestines it for the sun symbol. The rite in which Kalahari Bushmen shoot at the sun to injure their enemy has been noted. The following Lunda and Kaonde witchcraft rite in a similar manner fits the assumption that the sun may be shot at vicariously in place of quarry or human opponent. "If a man desires to kill his enemy, he obtains instruction from a (wizard) to dig a certain root and to gather leaves from a grave, to dry, pound and mix them with gunpowder, with which his gun is then loaded. At sunrise the man, mentioning his enemy by name, shouts: N.N. come between me and the sun! He then aims at the newly risen sun and fires. At the shot his enemy gets ill, and quickly dies!" (Melland, 1923, 213.)

Certain rock paintings further support the hypothesis that in hunting rites the sun (or other heavenly bodies) may be identified with the quarry and therefore, by implication, with the target of the r.t.g. In the monumental rock paintings of the Fezzan in North Africa two motifs occur according to Frobenius.[1] First is the lion facing the onlooker. This motif is connected with the hunting rites of what Frobenius calls the Mahalbi culture (Middle Stone Age), in which the right to hunt depended on a test of facing a furious lion. The simultaneous introduction to sexual life was achieved through circumcision which was interpreted as resulting from a blow of the lion's paw. The motif of the *enface* lion later fused with other animal symbols to become the Gorgo and thus the symbol of the sun.

The second motif noted among the Fezzan rock paintings in the netted wheel. It occurs in three situations. The netted wheel, consisting of three concentric circles connected by from six to eight spoke-like lines, is found between animals of the chase and their hunters. The engravings in *In Habeter III* show several such wheels between giraffes and hunters wearing animal masks. Or the netted wheel is shown between representatives of games, no hunters being shown, e.g. the engravings of *In Habeter II* depict the wheel among large birds — ostriches — and giraffes. Thirdly, the animals may be drawn within the netted wheel. *In Habeter II* shows an ostrich inside the netted wheel. This circumstance, already noted by Barth, was interpreted by him as "entry into the sacrificial circle". (Frobenius, 116–7, 132–3; illustrations pp. 132–3, plates 20, 21, 28).

Besides the netted wheel simple circles appear in the rock paintings. Their outline is sometimes dotted in part or entirely. Animals are shown pushing their heads into these circles or the circle is made round the neck (where an arrow shot would be most effective). A whole group of ostriches is shown inside one circle. The dotted circle also appears between quarry and hunters in the act of

[1] Frobenius, L., pp. 63–70, 95–101, 133–4. In the Fezzan the influences of the Sardinian culture area, fed in palaeolithic times from Spain, met those of the Arabian culture area whose most important centre was Egypt.

shooting, or a hunter is seen raising his weapon against an animal surrounded by the circle. In one or two of these paintings a third symbol may be seen. It is a circle from which many lines issue.

Frobenius interprets the rayed circles as symbols of the sun. We may agree with this, and go one step further to point out that it is the sun that is being shot at! Such a rite would be entirely in keeping with the Kasai Pygmy and Bushmen rites noted above and in particular with the Kaonde shooting rite. This interpretation is further strengthened by the general parallelism between primitive homoeopathic hunting rites and prehistoric ones to which reference has been made. But if the sun may have been ritually shot or stabbed at, surely a symbol of the sun, like the round target of the r.t.g., if it then existed, may have been shot at vicariously with a similar magical purpose. The circles and netted wheels may therefore be early pictures of the rolling target. A small, hitherto, unexplained feature of the Fezzan engravings may strengthen this supposition. Two of the netted wheels show each a single irregular line which it is impossible to explain as a "deformed" ray of the sun. It rather suggests the string or cord by which the target is swung in the Bongo, Ila and Kongo versions of the r.t.g. or the bolas and thonged stick with which the hoop is caught in so many other versions of the game.

Whatever the connexion between r.t.g. and sun may be — and we do not wish to press our hypothesis at this point [1] — there can be no doubt about the identification of the quarry (and the human enemy) with the sun. Why this should be so, may be difficult to grasp for the modern mind. The underlying notion may well be, that the sun as the agent which causes the shadow to form is held to be intimately related to the shadow-soul, the life principle of the human or animal quarry (Nachtigall, 261). Or secondly the shooting at the sun or sky is a rite which produces rain and by implication the return of grass on the parched pastures, which in turn will result in the reappearance of game.

The stabbing rite in initiation

As the Bantu seem rarely to have used anticipatory shooting rites such as are noted among Bushmen and Pygmies, search must be made for a different type of ritual pendant for their r.t.g. A possible hypothesis might be that the Bantu r.t.g. has a parallel in a rite which is performed to convey to prospective hunters the *charisma*, the special ability required for success in the chase apart from the game's anticipatory value in individual hunts. We would look for indications of such a rite in an area where the preparation for hunting — practical or magical — is a predominant feature of initiation. This is the case with South African initiation, as pointed out by Eiselen. A stabbing rite does indeed occur and the centre of its distribution lies among the Venda, Pedi and Thonga tribes, which coincides with the area in which the r.t.g. is played intensively.

When the Venda novices sit tightly packed round the fire in the circumcision camp, the instructors order them from time to time to "kill the elephant" which they do with a scooping movement of one hand into the palm of the other and then using a throwing gesture towards the fire symbolizing the throwing of spears at the elephant (Stayt). Junod's description of the Thonga initiation camp shows what an important place was accorded to the stabbing rite. The elongated fire place round which the novices sit, is called "the elephant". The boys sing for an hour in the morning, then they learn initiation formulas for an hour or two, after which they change their camp dress, sit round "the elephant" and stab "him" for two hours till the food arrives. After the meal and a further burst of singing, they paint themselves with clay and set out for their daily hunting trip. They come back before sunset, eat for a second time and "stab the elephant" for an hour before going to sleep. The stabbing is done with a stick which is lunged at the fire in a piercing movement, while the novices sing: "Elephant, keep still!" The elders and monitors meanwhile dance round the novices kicking and beating them. Whether this

[1] The methodological difficulties are discussed in Kühn H., (ii), Lehmann, R. F., Nachtigall, H., Richthofen, B. von. Professor van Riet Lowe in letter to author dated 20 2 43 : "Any reconstruction about the rites and ceremonies of these prehistoric peoples is purely speculative and unscientific."

stabbing rite is associated in the mind of the Thonga with the r.t.g. is not on record. It would be surprizing if it did not do so in the past, since the target in the game is called "little elephant" and in a variant of the r.t.g. is pulled past the "stabbers".

The stabbing rite in Pedi initiation is combined with the name-giving ceremony at the end of camp life. "The elder men spend some days carving wooden figures of animals . . . The most important is a rhinoceros. As the boys sit by the fire in the evening this figure is slowly drawn past them. As it passes each novice stabs at it with a miniature spear, declaring the honour name which he has adopted." He also recounts at length the exploits he is going to perform in peace and war. After this the models of other animals are produced before the whole company. Elders, monitors and novices go through the action of stabbing each beast, at the same time uttering its avoidance name. There are about 24 models. The stabbing is a magical rite for securing either a kill in hunting or success in war. In the former case the models represent the animals themselves, in the latter the hostile clans of which the animals are the totems. In this connexion it is important to note, that no model of the porcupine, the royal totem of the Pedi of Sekukuni, is included among the animals stabbed. The value of the rite for hunters in training is enhanced by the reciting of the avoidance names of the animals. Their knowledge is a necessary ritual equipment of truly initiated hunters. A third motive, that of introducing the novice to important clan symbols, seems to be at work among the Ba-Tsu, a cognate tribe. There the novices are made to face the lion-model without flinching — it is the royal clan totem. They are also shown the wolf-model representing the clan which introduced circumcision. In the Ba-Kone initiation a man masked in lion skins appears before the novices. The boys, who have just been thrashed, advance with their small assegais, throw a cordon round the lion and ostensibly kill it (Roberts and Winter, 1915, 576–8; Pitje, 1950, *passim*).

The stabbing rite is also observed in the initiation of the Sotho tribe of the Woodbush mountains. The "stabbing of the elephant" is one of the most important occupations of the novices during the first half of the camp. The novices, who lie on their backs in the circumcision hut singing a *koma* (lit. a circumcised penis) song, execute movements towards the moon in the manner of throwing spears although — like the Venda — they hold nothing in their hands. (Hoffmann, C., 81–112). The Hlubi, a very conservative tribe of mixed Nguni and Sotho stock, observe the stabbing rite at sun rise. The novices stand all poised for the appearance of the sun and throw their spears as he comes over the horizon. The novice whose spear first strikes and remains sticking in the ground is praised by the many onlookers (Mzamane). A similar rite is apparently known to the Basuto, for Ashton (53) reports that as the sun rises over the horizon the novices "pierce the sun" and so greet the dawn of their new life. Even among the Bergdama a stabbing rite during the last stages of initiation has been recorded (Lebzelter, 1934, 138). After the anointing of novices, the slaughtering of animals and a common meal and drinking rite, a shooting test takes place. First the two elders of the initiation camp shoot at a certain tree, then the novices. Any novice who fails to hit the tree has to pay a fine of one head of cattle. The shooting is continued until all candidates have hit the tree. No better proof exists for our assumption that the stabbing or shooting rite magically transmits hunting skill.

The stabbing rite occurs also in East African initiation rites. A curious feature of the Chewa rite is that it appears in the initiation of girls (Hodgson, 1933, 134). On a certain day, called *siku la kunwa*, a masked dancer, called "elephant", appears before the girls, while four other dancers cut at him with their axes and men howl in the surrounding bush like hyenas waiting for his death. In this scene — according to the informants — the Rhodesian Ajere hunters are being mimicked who hamstring an elephant before spearing him to death. During the Great Circumcision of the Kamba, i.e., the initiation following some time after the physical operation, the "rhinoceros" makes its appearance. It is a structure made of sticks and branches in which men are hidden who produce a weird noise to frighten women and children. The novices have to "shoot the rhino" by striking the skin screen be-

hind which it stands. As among the Pedi, the novices at the same time announce their names (N.N.'s son). (On the following day a hunting expedition for lizards, grasshopers, etc., is undertaken with miniature bows and fragile bird arrows.) (Lindblom, 1934.) Among the Kikuyu, whose initiation has nowhere been described fully, Kenyatta (p. 130 ff., Hobley, 82, Barlow) mentions the throwing of a spear over a tree by the winner of the initiation race. The branches of this tree are then torn off by the girls for making the sacred fire. This happens after the Great Dance and before the operation is carried out. In a subsidiary ceremony "the stabbing of a tree" occurs. In the initiation of other tribes the stabbing of antheaps — the symbol of the ancestors — has been recorded.

Where the stabbing rite is transferred to a different cultural or social configuration, i.e., when it occurs without a reference to the hunting ideology, we expect modifications in the meaning given to the stabbing act. A case in point is the arrow-shooting in the initiation of the Bu-Yeye, the secret snake charmer society of the Sukuma. The ritual shooting takes place after the novices have run in circles round three mounds in which charms are buried. Having then crawled through the outstretched legs of the master of ceremonies, each novice shoots off an arrow into the heaps in turn. Each time a pupil shoots the master of ceremonies asks: What is your name? and the novice answers with his secret society name, the name of a snake. In three other Sukuma societies concerned with ancestor worship, divination and twin births respectively, the novices are led into the bush to their tree chief. Each society recognises a tree chief. For the Bu-Yeye it is the euphorbia. One or two roots of the tree are exposed. The novices are ordered to fall on their faces before the tree and to shut their eyes. On being ordered to get up, each novice shoots an arrow at the exposed root and, at the moment of shooting, calls upon his specific totem. Thus a member of the Bsiba clan would exclaim: "I shoot our father of the grasshoppers." Cory (1946, 160 *seq.*) can find no other explanation than the Oedipus complex to account for the shooting ta the roots, and it is not impossible that in this instance the shooting rite has become adjusted to notions of sexual conflict. Cory argues that the shooting at the mounds in the snake society initiation is borrowed from the shooting at the roots rite of the other societies. But assuming the Oedipus complex to be of a "spiritual nature" — since it is directed against the ancestral chief tree, — he concludes that it is out of place in an initiation with a professional-practical purpose. If Cory had known the wide-spread use of stabbing or shooting rites as a magical method of acquiring skills, his psychoanalytical explanation might have appeared less plausible to him.

The other example of the modification of the stabbing rite in accordance with the prevailing cultural configuration is taken from West Africa. Among the Pangwe (Fan), who dwell 500 miles north of the mouth of the river Congo, the tribal cults consist in the worship of the forces of Nature. The cult of the Evil comprises *first* the worship of the moon under the symbol of the antelope forming the *sso* cult and under the image of the owl (*bekung* cult) and *secondly* the worship of water under the image of the elephant (*shok* cult). The worship of the Good includes the cult centring round the sun (*ndongmba* cult), also under the image of the cock (*elong* cult) and the cults centring round the fire under the image of the gorilla (*ngi* cult). An assential part of each cult is the erection of a giant clay model of the object of the cult, e.g., the *bokung* figure, which has *materia magica* hidden in its body and is supplied with a large clay penis; it has red and white circles painted on it representing the sun. During initiation the novices have to crawl through a passage inside this figure which is filled with disgusting and pain-inflicting animals and plants. At another stage of the ceremony the novices, armed with spears, stab them into the model's monster belly. In various other rites the rising or setting sun or moon is pointed at or "threatened" with a whisk (Tessmann, 1913, II, 39 ff.).

(To be concluded)

KIKUYU TALES

C. CAGNOLO

PART V

26. THE HARE, THE HYENA AND THE LION

Once upon a time three jungle beasts met at a cross-road not very far from the Kikuyu country. They were very thin and dejected from lack of food.[1] In those days there was a great famine in the country, and food was very scarce. They had already eaten their little ones, and there was no sign of better times in the near future. They sat down exhausted and had a consultation, to see if there was something they could do to overcome the ordeal, at least for some months.

"What shall we do?" asked the lion.

"What shall we do?" repeated the hyena stupidly.

"There is something we can do", answered the hare. "I know of a place in a valley a little distance from here, where there is water and good land for cultivation. We shall go there and clear enough land for all of us. There we shall sow our seed, and in a very short time this unpleasant situation will be relieved."

"You are right, dear hare, but first we must agree on some conditions about the work, in order to avoid any possible quarrel. First of all, we shall work as a team. Secondly, nobody will be allowed to rest or stay at home while the others are working in the field. Agreed?" asked the lion.

"Yes, agreed."

"The partner who breaks his pledge will not only forfeit his share in the crops, but will be eaten up by the other two. Agreed?"

"Yes, agreed", answered again the other two partners.

In fact they went to the spot mentioned by the hare, and found it very suitable and promising. They cleared the bush, prepared the ground carefully,[2] and planted several kinds of quick-growing crops. The understanding among them was as good as could be desired. The crops were growing marvelously, thanks to the moisture which was abundant in the undersoil of the valley.

One day they decided to go all together to the common field to weed the crops. Each provided himself with a *moro* (digging stick), and, very early in the morning, they went on the path leading to the field. After some time, the hare sat down in a grassy place and remained quietly resting. The other partners looked at him and both said: "The hare is taking a rest. It is against the agreement. Let him be eaten up."

"I am not resting", said the hare; "I am just thinking over and over something I cannot explain."

"What is that?" asked the others.

"The queer thing is this: old clothes wear out and disappear bit by bit. Where do they go to?"

[1] In former times the staple food of the Akikuyu consisted of beans, dhurra (*sorghum vulgare pers.*), dove peas (*Caianus indicus*), *njahe* (*Dolicos labla*), sweet potatoes (*ipomea batata*), millet (*panicum italicum*) and bananas. Recently maize was introduced through the Wakamba, and now it has become the staple food of the country. In the colder districts, the European potato and many other European vegetables have been introduced with success, and have proved to be a real boon to the population. Meat and milk are very much appreciated, but very few can afford them.

[2] The Akikuyu are essentially agriculturists. At the arrival of the Europeans their methods of cultivation, although sufficient for their subsistence, were very primitive. A piece of land was cleared of bush with long knives. Then six or eight Akikuyu would dig it with light sharp poles (*monyago*), moving and turning over large sods. The women came after them with a stick (*moro*) to beat the clods into pieces, roughly levelling the ground. The young generation now accept the hoe, and the old sharp pointed poles have almost entirely disappeared. The sowing is done in the raining season. Maize and beans bear twice a year.

"You are right, Hare; your question is really a serious one, and we cannot answer it."

When they had walked nearly half way, the hare sat down again and remained still as before.

"The hare is resting again," said the other two partners, "let him be eaten up."

"No, my dear friends, I am not resting", said the hare. "I am just thinking over another problem which I cannot solve at all."

"What is that?"

"Well, you see: here are two stones; one is very big and the other very small. Why is it that the big one does not sink into the ground, and the small one does not rise into the air?"

Then followed dead silence for a while, until the partners said: "You are quite right, but neither can we explain why the stones behave in such a way."

They resumed their journey, and went further on. At a certain place the hyena too stopped, and sat down on the road.

"The hyena is sitting," said the other two, "let him be eaten up."

"Just a moment," said the hyena, "I am thinking."

"Yes, what are you thinking?"

"Well, just nothing."

The hyena put himself in a fix and, being very stupid, could not extricate himself. The other two partners jumped upon him and killed him. He was devoured on the spot. After that the lion and the hare continued their journey to the field. They went on for a good distance, until they arrived at a place where there was a very small passage under big stones. It was a short cut leading to the next valley. The hare stopped again, looking at the hole.

"The hare is sitting down," said the lion, "let him be eaten up."

"Wait a bit, dear friend; our ancestors used to pass through this tunnel. I think we must do the same. And, besides that, it is a short cut, and we shall arrive at the field sooner."

The hare entered, and went through very easily. He came back again to demonstrate to the lion how easily it could be done, and said: "Go on, dear lion, it is so easy and even pleasant, when you get to the other side, and see the valley at your feet."

The lion sniffed the bottom of the passage and, after some hesitation, decided to enter. He went on crouching, forcing his way through the stones; but, after a few efforts, he got stuck and jammed between two sharp stones. He could go neither forward nor backward. That was exactly what the hare expected to see. With great joy he started to bite the lion from the back, snatching big lumps of flesh from his buttocks. The lion, feeling great pain, cried out: "Dear brother, you can't help me in that way. Come in front of me, please."

"Dear lion, I dare not come in front of you. Aren't you the King of all animals? I'll never do that, just out of respect, you know."

So the hare continued to bite and snatch at the body of the lion, until he reached the interior parts, and killed the beast. Of the three partners he was the only one to survive and enjoy the fruits of the garden.

"Oge okerete hinya."

27. THE SQUIRREL AND THE HARE

A long time ago two small animals of the bush lived in cordial relationship, helping each other as much as they could. They were a squirrel and a hare. One day the squirrel wanted to visit his father-in-law, and have a talk about the dowry paid for his wife. He asked the hare to accompany him there, because it is always advisable to have a witness in a business matter like that. The hare didn't refuse, and promised to go with him the following day.

But during the night the hare regretted his promise, and would have preferred to stay at home and sleep until late, instead of going with the squirrel. He thought of some excuse, but could not find a very convincing one. So he pretended to be ill.

Very early in the morning the squirrel came to knock at the door saying: "My friend, it's time; let us go before the sun gets too hot."

The hare kept silent. The squirrel insisted with a long call like this: "Barrr . . . barr . . ."

No answer came from within. He raised the pitch of his voice and again said: "Barrr ... barr ..." This time the hare answered: "Kwarrr... kwarrr ..."

"Make haste," said the squirrel, "we have no time to waste."

"Oh dear friend," said the hare, "I was quite well last night when you left me, but now, oh dear ... I feel very sick. I think I am going to die. I doubt if I am able to get out of my bed."

"But are you so seriously sick?"

"I don't know; but I am half dead."

The squirrel went to see for himself the amount of truth in such a serious statement. His first impression was that there was much exaggeration; and, reassuring himself, said: "What shall we do? The appointment was arranged for to-day. They have slaughtered a fat sheep, and have brewed a quantity of beer for us.[1] Shall all these things go for nothing? I can't bear even the thought of it, because the consequences would be disastrous. What do you think? There is no room for a joke. Pull yourself together, and take courage; you will feel better after a little walk, as soon as you have breathed the fresh morning air."

The hare yielded to the squirrel's insistence and, still pretending to be sick, said in a low voice: "You are right, friend; let me try if I can stand on my feet and walk." He left his bed, and came out of the hut without any difficulty. When both were in the courtyard, the squirrel said: "I am so anxious to have your company in this business, that I am ready to carry you in my hands."

"No, no," said the hare, "if you want to carry me, you must carry me on your shoulders. Your hands are not strong enough, and I would slip down and hurt myself."

"All right, friend; I will carry you on my shoulders."

"But you must put a saddle on your shoulders."

So the squirrel had to go and fetch a saddle for his friend.

In the meantime the hare entered his hut for his toilet. He parted his hair in an attractive way, and poured special scented ointment all over his fur. It was shining like the moon. After a while, the squirrel arrived with the saddle. Everything was fixed up properly, and the hare sat triumphantly on him. At last they started on their journey.

They went on for a couple of hours or so, chatting and singing in a soft voice. Then the hare began to grumble and said: "I am ashamed, I am ashamed."

"Ashamed of what?" asked the squirrel.

"Ashamed of your tail. It is so long; it is so ugly! I refuse to go any further. You must cut it, and reduce it to the same length as my own. You see how short mine is?"

The squirrel stood silent for a moment, but, in the end, resigned himself, and cut his tail just the length of a finger from the body.

"That's nice," said the hare, "now we are more than friends; we are two brothers from the same father."

They resumed their journey and, at the end of another hour, they reached the village they were seeking. There was a good gathering of guests; the meat was already roasted; and the beer was

[1] Among the well-to-do Akikuyu the quantity of native beer required for marriage transactions is amazing. They exploit every circumstance to extract as much beer as possible from the bridegroom's family, and so prolong the feasting. Each toast has a special name, so that it seems quite a matter of course in the tribal customs. The following list may be regarded as reflecting the common etiquette. Native beer is called *njohi*:

(a) *Njohi ya njorio*, for wooing the girl.

(b) *Njohi ya gothugumitheria mbori*, to stimulate urination in the goats paid for the dowry.

(c) *Njohi ya morwanyina*, to be drunk by the brother of the fiancée.

(d) *Njohi ya agendi a ithe*, to be drunk by the relations of the girl's father.

(e) *Njohi ya motumia*, to be drunk by the mother of the girl.

(f) *Njohi ya moherega*, to be drunk by the clan.

(g) *Njohi ya kwona ngoima*, to examine the fat sheep which will be slaughtered at the reckoning of the dowry.

(h) *Njohi ya koguraria*, to reckon the number of animals already paid for the dowry.

(i) *Njohi ya motiri*, for the sponsor at the circumcision of the bride.

(j) *Njohi ya moruithia*, for the circumcisor of the bride.

(k) *Njohi ya koremerwo*, to obtain leave from the father of the bride that she may cultivate the suitor's fields.

(l) *Njohi ya ohiki*, to obtain consent to marry.

More could be added even after the marriage, because the elders never succeed in quenching their thirst satisfactorily.

waiting to be poured out from the big calabashes lined in the courtyards. They sat down and were served abundantly with good food.

When the time arrived to drink the beer, the master of the house had a look at his guests. He was most surprised at seeing his son-in-law without the usual long tail. He began to doubt his identity, and wondered if it could be an intruder. After a closer examination, he concluded that some trick had been played, and shouted in front of all the guests: "This is not my son-in-law; he has no tail. We do not associate, and what is more, we do not marry tailless people."

"But father," said the squirrel, "don't you know me? It is I who paid the dowry for your daughter. I am your son-in-law."

"Oh no, no! you are an impostor; you have no tail; and my son has a tail and a beautiful one. You are an intruder. Come along, my servants, and beat severely these intruders who pretend to be my relatives."

The servants came along with big sticks. In a moment they attacked the poor victims, and beat them mercilessly. The hare then said to the squirrel: "Is this the feast you asked me to partake of? You stupid squirrel, you are responsible for all this mess."

"Shut up," said the squirrel, "isn't it you who caused me to cut my tail, and made me unrecognizable to my relatives?"

The servants continued to beat them vigorously, while they were quarrelling and screaming, and beat them until both were killed on the spot.

28. THE VICTIMS OF GREEDINESS

A long time ago the Kikuyu country was struck by a terrible famine. The sun was scorching, the trees drooping, and the water non-existent except in the big rivers, which were reduced to very small dimensions resembling tiny brooks. There was great suffering amongst men and beasts alike.

One day the beasts had a gathering, and had a long discussion on how they could escape death from lack of water. They knew of a place where men had dug a pit,[1] and found enough water for their daily use. The water however was strictly forbidden to them; so, unless they risked their lives, it could not be approached, even by night, because it was continually guarded. They agreed to dig their own pit in the desert, far from any human habitation. It was clearly understood and emphasized that all the animals should contribute their share of work without exception. The animal which refused to work should be forbidden access to the well.

They worked hard for a full week and, at the end of it, they found water in great quantity and sufficient to satisfy the needs of the whole community. But every one had noticed that the hare never appeared during the toiling days of work; so, according to the common agreement, he was to be forbidden to approach the water.

The animals held another meeting, in which they asked for volunteers to guard the well and scare off all the idle creatures, especially the hare. The gazelle stood up in the midst of the assembly and said: "I will guard the well and will start this very day." The assembly was satisfied, and the gazelle went to mount guard at the well.

At sunset the hare made his appearence at the well, with the definite intention of carrying away some water and quenching his thirst. He came with two small calabashes. One was full of honey, and the other one was empty. As it was approaching the well, the gazelle shouted out: "Who is there?"

"It is I," said the hare, "and I am coming to you with a wonderful medicine, very sweet and having marvellous power."

"Show me what it is like, and allow me to have a lick at it."

"Here it is; but, mind you, just a lick and nothing more."

The gazelle tasted the honey with the tip of his tongue. "How delicious!" he said, "let me have another lick, please; it is so sweet!"

[1] Digging pits in search of water is not in use in the Kikuyu region proper. There are two rainy seasons in the year, and the country is fairly well watered by rivers and brooks. This tale probably refers to the nearby country of Ikamba, or the northern country of Turkana.

"Yes, you may have it; but on one condition."

"What is the condition?"

"You must allow me to fasten you with a few strings."

"Agreed. Do what you like, provided you allow me to lick your wonderful medicine again."

The hare fastened the gazelle with many tough strings, and, when the poor thing was unable to move, he filled the second calabash with good, fresh water and returned to his home.

The following morning the other animals came to the well, and were greatly puzzled at seeing the gazelle crouched on the ground, entangled in a mass of strings.

"By whom have you been fastened like this?" they asked.

"By the Masai. They came in great numbers. They overpowered me, fastening my legs as you see. Then they began to drink, and carried away a great number of receptacles full of water, without bothering about me at all."

The other animals pitied the poor gazelle, and unfastened him. The waterbuck then came forth and said: "I am ready to mount guard to-night, and I am sure I'll succeed in my duty." The other animals accepted the proposal, and waited for the report.

At sunset the hare returned with his two calabashes. He shook the two receptacles together, producing a noise similar to the rhythmical beating of drums. The waterbuck looked at him and asked: "Who is there?"

"It is I", said the hare. "Good news, brother waterbuck. I have discovered a wonderful medicine, which rejuvenates old folk, and . . . it is so sweet!"

"You lucky little thing! Let me see it."

"Here it is."

"May I have a lick at it, and taste the sweetness?"

"Sure; but just the surface; nothing more."

The waterbuck had a lick at the surface of the reddish substance which was in the calabash. It swallowed the honey greedily, and said: "True, this medicine must be wonderful. Won't you let me have another lick at it?"

"Yes, but on one condition."

"What's that?"

"That you allow me to fasten you with this rope."

"Do what you like, provided you give me the pleasure of another lick at your medicine."

The waterbuck was fastened very carefully because of his strength. Then the hare left him there. He went to replenish the second calabash with fresh water and made for home. The waterbuck protested, but to no avail.

The following morning the animals returned to the well, and were shocked to see the waterbuck fastened, and lying on the ground as a captive in a trap.

"Who did that, brother waterbuck?" they asked.

"The Masai warriors came here with spears and shields. They overcame me, and went away with a great supply of water."

They unfastened the poor waterbuck, and set themselves thinking what was to be done to guard the well safely. In the meantime the hyena came forth, and said it would mount guard at the well. All the other animals laughed at him; but nobody objected to his proposal.

The hare returned with the two calabashes, and played the same trick as before. The hyena was very easily pinned to the ground. In the morning the other animals put the same question to the hyena, which again said that the Masai came in great numbers and overcame him. Of the three animals, not a single one said that it was outwitted by the hare, which is a despicable little thing.

At last the elephant came forth and said: "I will be at the well to-night and see if these arrogant Masai will overcome me. I am strong enough to crush them under my feet like mushrooms in the forest." The other animals applauded the proposal, and were quite confident that at last they had found the solution to the problem. Surely the elephant would finish the job in a way worthy of his strength.

The sun was just going down beyond the ridge of the hills, when the hare appeared again on the spot with his two magic calabashes. It reproduced the usual rattling, while humming a song.

"Who is there?" asked the elephant.

"It is I, dear father elephant. I am just coming to see you, and bring you the good news."

"What news? What are you talking about?"

"Nothing less than a new discovery, father elephant. Look at this small calabash. It is full of a new medicine which works wonders among old and young people alike, and . . . it is very sweet."

"Sweet, you say?"

"Yes, honey is nothing in comparison with this."

"Let me see it and have a lick at it."

"Certainly; but mind, just a lick."

The elephant touched it with the tip of its trunk, and brought to its tongue a little portion of the reddish substance. It swallowed several times, evidently with great pleasure and satisfaction, and said: "My little one, give me some more, it is so sweet!"

"Yes, father elephant; but on one condition only."

"What is that?"

"That you allow me a little fun, and try to fasten you with this rope."

The elephant laughed at the proposal, and said: "Agreed."

The hare then drew around him several times a long rope, and after that said: "Try now if you can unfasten yourself."

The elephant stretched its legs, curved its back and the rope went to pieces. The hare asked to repeat the joke, and began again to fasten him; but now with a bigger rope, and a double length of it. The elephant tried a second time to free itself; but this time did not succeed. He became furious, but uselessly. The trick was complete; and he had to lie down and await the help of the other animals. The hare looked for a while at the distressed beast, then calmly went to the well and drew as much water as he liked.

The following morning all the animals came very early to the well to congratulate the elephant; but how disappointed and shocked they were, when they saw the elephant lying on the ground, entangled in a heap of ropes. They were horrified, and asked the elephant: "Who did all this to you?"

"The Masai made this mess. They are terrible warriors," he said, " they are unbeatable."

The animals helped him, as well as they could, to extricate himself from the entanglement, and after some time the elephant was free again. It was a shame; but the elephant did not go any further in explaining the details of what took place at the well. All the animals remained silent for a long while, in great consternation, until the crab came forth and said: "Leave the matter to me. I think I am the only one who can put things right in this business. I'll watch at the well tonight." The other animals accepted the proposal, although they were very doubtful. Anyhow there was no other alternative for the moment.

The crab concealed himself in the water, and patiently waited to see what was going to happen. At sunset, as usual, the hare returned to the well with his two calabashes, ready to play his trick again. But nobody was guarding the well; all was silent there. He suspected some ambush. He looked around carefully again and again, between the bushes, on the trees, in the dry grass. Not a single creature was to be seen. He then hasted to the well with his empty calabash, to fill it with water and return home as quickly as possible. He wanted to have a drink first; but he had hardly touched the surface of the water with his nose, when the crab pinched him with his claws, and kept him firmly at the edge of the well. The sharp pain made the hare shriek loudly.

The shrieks were interpreted as an alarm by the other animals. They rushed to the spot to see what was the matter. There they found the hare screaming desperately, and making useless efforts to escape, because the pincers of the crab had already penetrated its flesh, and fixed him to the ground. In an instant the animals were on the hare and grasped him. They kept him in captivity, pending the arrival of all the animals to discuss the case.

A great gathering of animals took place. When the circle of the assembly was nearly complete, the crab came into the middle of it and, raising himself on his rear legs, said with great solemnity: "I am here to make a double statement. First of all, I am glad to state with certainty that the thief of our water is the hare, the tricky fellow who

refused to help us in digging the well. Secondly, I am ashamed to reveal here the venality of our guards. The Masai never appeared at the well; but something very treacherous went on between the guards and the hare, which they dared not disclose, when they found that their treason was well rewarded. I do not propose to discuss this second point to-day; it will be a matter for discussion some other day. Instead, I emphatically insist to-day that the hare be severely punished in our presence at this very moment, because, not only is he a lazy creature, but he is a thief by profession, and a real menace to our society, perverting our people in the most despicable way."

The crowd applauded vigorously, and the sentence of the crab on the hare was passed unanimously. He was condemned to be burnt alive. They lit a great fire on the spot, and, when the flame was very high, the hare was flung into it. There followed a soft detonation. They thought that that was the bursting of the hare, but it was only the effect of the hot air pierced by the throw. The cunning hare fell on the opposite site of the flame, and ran away suffering from some minor scorching.

When the fire had subsided, they went to see if any bone of the rascal was left in the embers. Not a single sign of bones was to be found. The animals started to discuss: "Is it burnt? did it escape? Yes! no! yes! no!" Nobody could be certain. The discussion grew very hot, so that fighting ensued, and the danger of a real battle was so evident that they had to disperse quickly, in order to avoid regrettable losses. The hare was left undisturbed, and he continued to live as happily as he did before.

29. THE HYENA AND WAKAHARE

One day a lucky hyena wooed a Kikuyu girl who accepted his proposal. On a fixed day he had to go to the girl's home to drink the prenuptial gruel,[1] which she prepared for the occasion. The hyena sought for some companion, and asked Wakahare (the tiny squirrel) to go with him. On the appointed day they set out for the girl's village.

On the way there Wakahare said: "Perhaps we had better carve a wooden knife for each of us, in case they have also prepared arum for our meal."

"You are right. Arum is very common in this district."

They carved out their knives, and went on again. After some journeying Wakahare stopped again and said: "But what is the use of these wooden knives? Let us throw them away and free ourselves of this nuisance! Probably they will serve us the arum with their knives." The hyena threw his away, but Wakahare concealed his in his clothes.

At sunset they arrived at the girl's house. They were cordially greeted and offered good tripods to sit on. As was foreseen, they were served with arum and gruel. Then Wakahare said: "My friend hyena, you had better go back and look for your wooden knife. How can you eat these arums without a knife?" The hyena was so embarrassed and clownish that he could't say a single word. Without losing time, he trotted back to the road to fetch the knife.

In the meantime, Wakahare helped himself to the arum, leaving only two pieces of it in the basket. At last the hyena returned and sat down to eat the arum. Then Wakahare stealthily collected all the arum skins it had peeled and put aside, and pushed them near the hyena. After some time, Wakahare pretended great surprise and said: "But my dear hyena, you must be moderate. You have arrived but a few moments ago. Look at the arum skins at your side, and judge for yourself the amount of arum you have already devoured." The hyena was confused and stopped eating any more.

At night they were shown a hut where sheep and goats were enclosed.[2] There were two beds,

[1] During the preparations for the marriage, the would-be bridegroom is requested to provide a great quantity of beer to the girl's relations. In return, the girl prepares millet gruel, which is drunk at night time by the suitor and his intimate friends.

[2] Small flocks of sheep and goats are kept in special huts called *thingira*. In such huts usually old men and boys have their beds fixed against the walls, where they spend the night with the animals.

and they felt quite comfortable. But Wakahare had a plan of his own. When the hyena was fast asleep, he approached his bed, and took his knife out of its leather bag. Then he cut the tail of the best sheep of the flock. He stained the mouth of the hyena with blood, and restored the knife, together with some meat, to the leather bag.

In the morning, when the people got up, Wakahare said to the master of the house: "I don't know, but I think that I heard something strange last night among your flock. Something happened that I couldn't explain."

The master went immediately to inspect the animals and, to his great surprise, found his best sheep dead, and without a tail. He asked the hyena: "What do you think of this?" "Me? I . . . I . . . really do not know."

Meanwhile the hyena felt the sweetness of the blood which was painted on his lips, and began to swallow, as if his mouth were full of food. He wondered and, gazing at the presents, asked: "Have you already eaten the *ndorome* (sheep) without calling me?"

"Are you dreaming, or are you fooling us? You ate the *ndorome*. Your mouth is still stained with blood, and your leather bag is full of meat. You greedy creature! How can I rely on you? I definitely refuse to have any relationship with you! Go back with your cattle, and clear out of this house as quickly as possible."

The poor hyena couldn't understand a bit of all that had happened. He was so confused that he couldn't find a single word of excuse, or ask for any explanation. He pushed away his cattle with the help of Wakahare, and set out for his home.

But that was not the end. When they were nearing his abode, Wakahare hid himself and disappeared. He went to set fire to the hyena's house. A little while after, he reappeared with faked fright, shouting: "Oh brother hyena! your house is in flames. Look there at the smoke! What do you think? Shall we go on with the cattle, or will you rush to your house and leave the cattle here in my custody?"

"I'll rush home. You stay here with the cattle, please!"

That was what Wakahare wanted. He cut the tails of the animals, and buried them half their length in the ground in a garden, and took the cattle thus mutilated some distance away. When the hyena returned, Wakahare made a great fuss, and shouted: "Come, come quickly, the cattle are disappearing into the ground. Take hold of their tails before they disappear completely." The hyena grasped at the tails and pulled with all the strength at his command, until he fell back head-over-heels with the tails in his hands.

"It is terrible," said the hyena, "I am the most unfortunate of all creatures. The tails have broken, and my cattle are gone for ever."

"I am extremely sorry," said Wakahare, "but your cattle are lost for ever in the earth, and nobody will be able to retrieve them."

The hyena went back dejected and in despair, while Wakahare returned to his home, congratulating himself on his excellent booty.

30. THE VULTURE AND THE HEN

Long ago the hen [1] and the vulture used to live on excellent terms, helping each other at any time they needed a hand to procure their domestic necessities.

[1] This tale must be relatively recent, or at least adapted to the new mode of life of the tribe. Before the arrival of the Europeans, fowls were not kept by the Akikuyu. If you asked them why, they would tell you that the cock with its morning crowing would have betrayed the location of their huts in the high bush, and the Masai would have come and raided them. Guinea-fowls and francolins were hunted and eaten only by the young boys. When poultry was introduced into the country, they persisted for many years in refusing to eat chicken and eggs. They began to keep fowls for the sake of gain, selling the eggs and chickens to the Europeans for cash. Nowadays the position has completely changed. They eat chicken and eggs, and get a good income from selling the products of their poultry.

One day the hen thought of borrowing a razor [1] from the vulture, to shave the little ones. The shaving was already much overdue, but it couldn't be helped, because she had no razor, and was depending on the kindness of her neighbours. So the hen went to see the vulture and said: "Dear vulture, I should like to borrow your razor; mine was lost months ago. My little ones are looking very ugly, and also very untidy, with their long unkempt hair overgrown."

The vulture listened to the hen with great concern and, after a short silence, said: "Dear hen, I cannot refuse you this favour. To-morrow perhaps I might need your help as well, and we must help each other. However, you must remember one thing. You know what that razor means to me. I have no other income except the rent of that razor; that is to say, that razor is my field, whence I get my daily food. I do not intend to ask you any fee as I do with others; but please be careful to return it to me, as soon as you have finished your shaving."

"Thank you, brother vulture, I quite understand what you say, and I am very grateful to you. I'll bring it back very soon."

The hen was very glad of the favour, and as soon as she arrived home, made arrangements to be shaved by another woman. The following morning she also shaved her two little ones, so that the whole family was now shining like the moon. The work over, instead of immediately returning the razor to the owner, she put it in a leather purse, which was hanging in a corner of the hut.

The days passed, and passed away like the water under the bridge, but the hen never thought again of returning the razor to the vulture. She forgot it completely. The vulture grew impatient, and deeply resented in his heart the unkindness, nay, the ingratitude of the hen. Pressed by necessity, he decided to go personally to the hen and demand his razor.

"Oh dear vulture," said the hen with confusion and great regret, "forgive me; I am so sorry for this my negligence. I really intended to return your razor very soon, but I put it in my leather bag, and forgot it completely. Let me go and take it; you will have it in half a minute."

"Yes, I know you are a forgetful creature; but look at the damage you have caused me. You have deprived me of my sustenance for many days. Mind you, if you have lost it, you will pay for it and very dearly", said the vulture. The hen rushed into the hut to fetch the razor. She plunged her hand into the leather bag, but alas! it was empty; there was no razor in it. She was very shocked at the unpleasant discovery. She started searching on the floor to see if by chance it had dropped from the bag, but there was no finding it. She looked under the children's bed, near the fire stones, in the store; but there was no sign of it. Tired and defeated, she came out and, imploring, said: "Oh dear friend and master, I can't find it. Have mercy on me! I will search better; I am ready to demolish my hut altogether, and search diligently until I find it and return it to you.

"I told you to be very careful, and I repeat it again: I want my razor back! But mind, I want the very one I gave you, and no substitute."

The poor hen spent all the day searching and searching, but nothing came to light. She demolished her hut, and started searching in the roof-grass, among the rubble of the walls, between the poles, in the ashes, and even in the rubbish pit; but nothing was found.

The following day the vulture came to see the results of the searching. He found the hen still scratching the ground among a heap of dry grass and ox dung; but no razor was yet discovered.

"I am very sorry, dear hen," said the vulture,

[1] Besides spears, arrows, knives, axes and ornaments, Kikuyu blacksmiths used to make razors. The Kikuyu razor differs very much from the European one. It is neither a shaped razor knife, nor a thin blade like the modern safety razor. It is a piece of iron, shaped like a triangle with a narrow base and sides about 2½ in. long. The instrument is rather substantial. The base is slightly curved and sharpened on gneiss stones to a degree that compares favourably with our ordinary razors. The Kikuyu axe has the same shape; the only difference being in its dimensions. Both reflect in some way the shape of the old silex instruments of the stone age, which probably were used for the same purpose. The Kikuyu razor is used almost exclusively for shaving the hair of both men and women. Men do not use it for shaving their face. They prefer to pull out their beard by means of special pincers (*ngori*) also made by their blacksmiths.

"but now I cannot wait any longer without compensation for my razor. For to-day you must give me a chicken.[1] To-morrow I will return and see what has happened in the meantime."

So the vulture flew away with a chicken gripped within his talons under its breast. The following day he returned to the hen. She was still scratching the ground; but she could not see any razor. Another chicken went with the vulture. And the same happened in the following days until to-day. That is the reason why the hen is always scratching the ground, and the vulture swooping on chickens even in our days. The hen is still searching for the razor, and the vulture compensating himself for its loss.

(Concluded)

OBITUARY

ALFRED T. BRYANT

We regret to record the death of Dr. Alfred T. Bryant which occurred in England on the 19th of June 1953.

The name of Bryant will forever be associated with the Zulus — their language, their history, and their manner of living.

Bryant was born in London on February 26th 1865. He was educated at the Birbeck College of the University of London and came to Natal in 1883. He joined the Marianhill Mission, where he conducted a boys' boarding school. Subsequently he trained as a priest, which necessitated his return to Europe, in 1887. He was ordained at the church of St. John of Latran, by the Latin Patriarch of Constantinople and had the honour to read his first mass on the high altar of St. Peter's in Rome.

He returned to South Africa in 1893 and worked for three years as a missionary amongst the Xhosa and Thembu tribes in the Transkei, but finally reached his beloved Zululand in 1896. Here he established a mission station on the Ongoye Range between the Umlalazi and Mhlathuze Rivers, and it was here that his interest in the Zulu language, which had begun when he first came to Natal, had an opportunity of development.

There is no doubt that Dr. Bryant's greatest contribution to learning was in the linguistic field. His Zulu-English dictionary, published in 1903, was a great advance on anything that had previously been produced. Not only in the number of its entries but in the copiousness of its material it was an outstanding piece of work. The idiomatic, illustrative sentences which augmented many of the mere meanings of words were in themselves a mine of information. One of the aspects of Zulu which particularly intrigued him were the ideophones which are so liberally scattered through its vocabulary and in his own English style he often used the bangs and the crashes and dead silences which are such a feature of ideophones. Of lesser importance was Bryant's English-Zulu Word Book, which is probably the best work at present available. He had prepared a much larger work, but it still remains in manuscript and reposes in the Killie Campbell library in Durban. The writer has made frequent use of it there.

Dr. Bryant's study of Zulu inevitably led him into the wider field of Bantu and of the other African languages, notably Sudanic, and he makes constant cross references in his dictionary to other languages to which he deemed Zulu to be related. His field was always getting larger, but his interest progressively increased, and no labour was too great for him, when a problem in linguistics gripped him. There were never any short cuts

[1] This story has obviously become changed; the original form must have had the Hawk instead of the Vulture; vultures do not prey on chicken (Ed.).

where he was concerned and he was never satisfied until a doubtful statement had been thoroughly probed and his conclusion verified by several independent informants.

He wrote a grammar of Zulu, which however was not published. Dr. Bryant generally had an original approach to any work and that is possibly why his grammar, which was an unconventional account of the language, did not find favour. For some years before his death he worked on a book entitled *Zulu Origins* in which he attempted to trace the beginning of Zulu and to establish its relationship to the other African languages. This also has not yet been published, but is a challenging and stimulating work, and may some day see the light. He revelled in a speculative and philosophical consideration of a subject, and as illustrating this, the following on the "Zulu Mind" culled from another unpublished essay is quoted:

> "If we contemplate the distinguished features of the African and European eye we shall obtain, as far as such will ever be attainable, an ocular demonstration of the main typical differences between the two minds — the eye of the Native, passive, soft, inert, unthinking, unselfconscious, seeing the things external, and of them only the surface, yet withal dignified and brave, frank, and unashamed as is the strong open nature for which it was fitted; that of the European active, keen, thoughtful, selfconscious, penetrating, spiritual, contemplating ideals higher and beyond those of mere matter. With this we shall have all we shall ever have of ocular demonstration of mind. For the rest, mind can be known only by inferences, and inferences here will prove slippery ground in a very hazy atmosphere."

In addition to his linguistic work Dr. Bryant was interested in the history of the Zulu people, and in 1920 was appointed Research Fellow and Lecturer in Bantu Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, a post which he held for three years and during which he delivered a series of interesting lectures upon which it is not possible to comment in this short review. After this service he wrote a history of the Zulu tribes entitled *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal.* This is a wonderful compilation tracing as it does the story of each tribe including its vicissitudes during the devastating period of Shaka's reign. The genealogies of the chiefs which go back into antiquity, or as far back as the Zulu memory is reliable, themselves add considerable to our knowledge. That Bryant should have been able to carry out the necessary research in the time is remarkable, and reveals the energy with which he applied himself to the task.

Another considerable work, which was published in 1949, was the book entitled *The Zulu People.* In this Dr. Bryant gives an ethnological account of the Zulus as they were before the whiteman came. It is an entrancing story, and accurate withal, covering with a great amount of detail the happenings in a Zulu arcadian life from the cradle to the grave. Dr. Bryant was not on such sure ground in assigning anthropological reasons to Zulu behaviour, as he is when dealing with languages, but the facts are there and they are a valuable addition to scientific knowledge.

Mention must also be made of Dr. Bryant's work in Zulu literature such as *Umsebenzi Wamapulazi* (The Work of the Farms), *Ukuphila Komzimba* (The Health of the Body), and *Inkambo Entle* (Good Behaviour). Many other lesser publications flowed from his pen.

Dr. Bryant has made an outstanding contribution to Zulu lore and as his work gets into perspective, the Zulu people themselves will increasingly appreciate the service he has done them in preserving so much of what might have been lost but for his abounding energy and patient and accurate recording. His death leaves a gap that is quite impossible to fill, but he will be remembered for many generations to come by the people he loved so well and served so faithfully.

We who knew him as scholar, as scientist, as philosopher and as friend salute his work which was recognized appropriately by the University of South Africa when it awarded him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1939. He leaves behind him a memory of kindly tolerance, puckish humour, and a great reverence for the truth.

D. McK. Malcolm.

CORRESPONDENCE

AMINA

LETTER TO THE EDITOR,
AFRICAN STUDIES.

SIR,

Von Sicard's article, "The Lemba Ancestor Baramina", overlooks a number of points. His conclusion: "It would appear that the Lemba conception of the chameleonlike Dema ancestor emanated somewhere in or near Abyssinia and that it spread from there to the West as well as to the South East", has considerable support if one regards that area as a focus of diffusion for east and south east Africa but not as a centre of origin of the Amina culture. The statement in footnote 2, p. 60, that the name Mawu has not found a satisfactory explanation will also be considered. Some light may be thrown on the root *-z-* for a blacksmith.

AMINA TRIBES

This name is found in West Africa as the name of a tribe or tribes and as a name for a god which can be traced back to Amon-Ra, the Ram-headed god of Egypt.

"Elmina" according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th ed., vol. VIII, p. 377, "was the first permanent European settlement on the Gold Coast. Diogo d'Azambuja was sent by John II of Portugal to the Coast for that purpose and he began, in 1481, the building of a fortress called São Jorge da Mina." This name is usually translated as Saint George of the Mine because of the supposed gold mines there. Thus Huntley (1850, I, 51) writes: "St. George d'el Mina, or St. George of the Mines."

Migeod (1910, 40) pointed out this error: "The name Elmina is commonly said to be derived from the word mine on account of its ancient export of gold. There have, however, never been any mines near it. When the Portuguese first came to the coast to effect permanent settlements, they selected the best port and in 1482 built a fort at the village of Oddena, naming it St. George (São Jorge). As they possibly owned other forts called St. George, the name of the country where their fort was erected was added to distinguish it. The name of the country was Amina. The full name of the fort was thus São Jorge d'Amina, which subsequently became corrupted by foreigners to Elmina, the gold explanation lending the idea that the name must have something to do with mining. All Ashanti and Fanti were in ancient times generally known as Amina, but the name has been obsolete for over a century now."

Wilson (1856, 85) confirms this last remark for he writes: "All the inhabitants between Cape Palmas and St. Andrew's belong to the great Kru or Mena family, between Cape Messurado and Cape Palmas . . ."

Bowditch (1819, 214, 87) writes: "Elmina, the native name of which is Addina, is about seven miles to windward of Cape Coast . . . Again when a war is about to take place between Cape Coast people and the Elminas, the Commendas went to the latter and said we will help you if you will give us plenty of powder to fight for you: they did so and immediately the Commendas used it to seize 98 Elminas and sold them as slaves."

Cust (1883, I, 198) speaking of the languages of the Gold Coast wrote: "Amina is (a name) used by Psotten, Oldendorp, Clarke, but has no distinct meaning and had better fall into disuse."

With this knowledge of the existence of Amina tribes on the West Coast of Africa one can see how wrong Leyburn (1937, 382) was when speaking of the different groups of Negroes in Haiti, he writes: "*Mines.* These slaves were so called because they came from the region of the Gold

Coast where the metal was obtained from mines. They lived near St. Georges de la Mine, the modern Elmina." Von Sicard makes no comment on how these people came to be called *Amina*, a point that is vital to his theory of the origin of *Amina*.

AMINA GODS

Palmer (1926, I, 75) writing of a sacred bundle called *Mune* described in the Kano Chronicle remarks: "A Zaghawi of Wadai stated that the Zaghawi name for a sacred Kura'an covered with skins like the Kano Dirki, was *Mani*. When asked whether *Mani* was anything else but the *Kura'an*, he stated that among the pagan Beli and Zaghawa, *Mani* was a 'ram' which was kept in a cave with other sacred objects, a fact, which if correct, accounts for the curious belief, current even now among the Tacruris in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, that, in a cave in Dala hill at Kano, there is a 'stone ram' comparable with those in the Egyptian temples at Luxor and elsewhere.

"In addition to this, *Mune* is the mythical ancestor of several Kanembu tribes or peoples, while at Kano a deity once worshipped at Dala is called *Amani* in the Chronicle. *Amani* is without doubt the same as the Tamashek word *Amanay* 'god', which in compound with *akal* 'earth', makes the titles *Aman-akel* or *Aman-okal*, the clan head or chief. Clearly, *Mune* or *Muni* was originally the Egyptian and Nubian god, Amen or Aman."

In my opinion the evidence produced by von Sicard merely shows other instances of the diffusion of this Egyptian god's name.

MAWU : MAU-MAU

Von Sicard remarks that the name *Mawu* has not found a satisfactory explanation. Dr. Leakey (1952, 95) states that he does not know the origin of the name Mau-Mau. There is in Western Africa a widespread root *mmɔ* which means spirit, ancestral ghost, i.e. the essential spirit or essence of a person. Similar to this word is an Egyptian one.

Budge (1911, 172) gives: "*Mu*, the god of the water, or divine essence of Ra . . ." Spirit of Ra would be equally true. Now *Mawu* refers to the spirit world, ancestral ghosts or spirits and so can be connected with *mmɔ* and *mu*. It is now necessary to discuss *Mau-Mau*. Kenyatta (1938, V) writes as the dedication of his book: "To Moigoi and Wamboi and all the dispossessed youth of Africa: for perpetuation of communion with ancestral spirits through the fight for African Freedom, and in the firm faith that the dead, the living and the born will unite to rebuild the destroyed shrines." Here is an appeal to the ancestral spirits and I contend that the name *Mau-Mau* is but the name Ancestral Spirits coined from the root *Mmɔ* or *Mu* and hence an equivalent of *Mawu*.

SMITHS

Von Sicard writes: "Thus, Leza as well as Liza are regarded as heavenly smiths" (Torrend, cit. Baumann, p. 36; Herskovits, cit. Tegnaeus, p. 64). The root + *Z* + as found in *L* + *z* + for a smith or metal worker is found in West Africa. Thus Palmer (1928, III, 82) writes: "Bini country is north of Kotonkoro and Madoro is west of Kogo and Chafi and south of Gusau. Throughout this region, as well as in Sokoto, Dendi and Borga, a caste of artificers, metal-workers, and leather-workers, etc., exists and has since the days of the Songhay empire, been called *Zogoran*, *Zugu*, *Zugurma* or *Zoromawu*. They are distinct from the other populations and seem to have come into the country with the so-called 'Kisara' (Zoghawa) imigration A. D. 600–1000. It is probable that from them originally came the Nupe metal workers and not improbably those of Benin as well."

The Umundri tradition among the Ibo is that the smiths of Awka, famous throughout the land, were sent down by the sky-god *Chiuku* to dry up the land with their bellows. Tradition varies whether one smith or whether four smiths were sent down but the point to notice is that to-day *ɔzɔ* is the Ibo name for a metal worker.

Burckhard (1831, I, 65) report's a similar name for metal workers among the Bedouin: "Two or three blacksmiths to shoe the horses and some saddlers to mend the leather-work, are the only artists found even in the most numerous tribes (of the Aeneze Arabs). These workmen are called *Szona:* they are never of Aezene origin, because their occupations are regarded as degrading to a free-born Aeneze."

Finally Friend (1926, 171) points out that: "Enoch (VIII, 1) recalls the general tradition that the first metal worker was a divine being, the fallen angel Azazel being a teacher of the art." This name Azazel appears, according to Nestle (1909, II, 283) as Asael for the writes: "In the book of Enoch (ch. 6) Asael is the name of one of them, in the Greek text (ed. Radermacher) *Ἀσεαλ*, Syncellus *Ἀζαηλ*." For those who like invoking the principle of metathesis, then Asael gives one Leasa = Leza = Lisa.

These are points not considered by von Sicard and they weaken his conclusions that the *fons et origo* of Amina and Leza is where he places it. It is quite clear that these cultural phenomena derive from the Fertile Crescent and are not Negro or Erythranean inventions.

M. D. W. Jeffreys.

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HONORIFIC CREMATION IN SOUTH EASTERN AFRICA

The following communication has been received from Rev. Harald von Sicard:

Honorific cremation, in contrast to cremation of evil-doers, has been reported by the Rev. Bain from the Konde in Nyasaland. H. v. Wissmann states, referring to him: "Bei den WaKonde wird drei Tage nach Eintritt des Todes eines Menschen, weil dann das Leben sicher aus dem Körper gewichen sei, der Leichnam verbrannt, die Asche desselben in kleinen Töpfen angesammelt und von der Familie aufbewahrt" (*Meine weite Durchquerung,* p. 277).

Willoughby (p. 47, note) mentions another instance of honorific cremation, "reported from Zulu immigrants into Central Africa", which must refer to the Nguni, but he gives no details.

Instances of honorific cremation are also found among different Nguni groups from the Limpopo down to Zululand. Thus, Stayt (p. 212) mentions "a form of cremation" used in the burial of Tavhatsinde chiefs (cf. for this tribe Bullock, pp. 43,

207; v. Sicard: *Nada*, 1952, p. 56 *s.*, "Ngoma", sub-Index; v. Warmelo, pp. 126 *s.*, 177). When all the flesh had dropped off the bones, these were laid on a funeral pyre on a flat rock in a river, in a small open hut, and the whole structure was then burnt, whereupon the ashes were washed into the river. — The Tavhatsinde are a Nguni group.

In the *Berliner Missionsberichte* for 1889, p. 546, there is a note about honorific cremation in the Northern Transvaal to the effect that the people of Tsaulu "verehren einen grossen Fluss. Jauchzend und singend ziehen sie derthin und giessen Bier hinein. Stirbt König Lambane, so wird er verbrannt und in den heiligen Fluss gestreut. Dies geschieht alles hier im Gebiet von Georgenholtz." This note is of some interest as the same information is contained in a paper written 63 years later by H. Dumbrell *African Studies*, 1952, p. 190 *s.*), who renders the name of King Lambane with Japane, and Tsaulu with Mzeula.

Contrary to the cremation custom, a Venda who moves from his kraal "will see that fire does not sweep over it, for his fathers have died there" (Bullock, p. 43, note 2).

Finally, Callaway was informed by a Zulu that "at first the bodies of the dead were burnt", especially the remains of a chief, and many of his servants were burnt together with him (p. 213, cit. Willoughby, p. 47 *s.*).

Apparently honorific cremation developed among the Nguni in the south, under foreign influence, and went with them to the north, either in connection with an early migration (the Tavhatsinde have been on the Limpopo for at least two centuries and H. Junod postulates a Nkuna immigration from Zululand to the Limpopo "at least 300 years ago" (I, pp. 357, 409) or was it taken over from some foreign source "at no very distant date" (Willoughby, p. 47, note), or must we assume a combination of both. Whether this foreign influence has come directly from India (Jeffreys, *Afr. Studies*, 1952, p. 191), or via Java and Madagascar ("La relation de Couto, le texte d'Edrisi et, d'une façon plus brève, celui d'Ibn Sa'id, mentionnent expressément que Madagascar a été colonisé par des Javanais qui trafiquaient également dans les ports de l'Afrique orientale", Ferrand, p. 223) can so far only be conjectured. At any event, there remains the question: Why have just the Nguni accepted the rite and none of the other African tribes, for instance on the Lower Zambezi, where the Indian influence would seem to have been as strong as in the south ?

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Southern Sotho-English Dictionary. ADOLPHE MABILLE and HERMANN DIETERLEN, reclassified, revised and enlarged by R. A. PAROZ. (Morija, Basutoland: 1950.) xvi + 445 pp., double col., 16/–.

The first edition of this dictionary was published by Mabille back in 1876, and several editions revised and augmented by Dieterlen appeared later, the *Sesuto-English Dictionary* holding the field until 1950. This latest edition, edited by R. A. Paroz, the author of *Elements of Southern Sotho*, is a very considerable advance on the already good work of his predecessors. The altered title brings it up to date with modern linguistic classification and accepted spelling. But Paroz has contributed certain outstanding improvements:

1. Instead of the old method of classifying the words (nouns) under their prefixes, the reviser has classified according to stems, thus bringing Southern Sotho into line with Bantu lexicographical principles. The value of this is soon seen in the classification together of verb, noun, or ideophone employing the same stem.

2. Throughout, Jacottet's system of vowel distinction has been employed, an inestimable advantage to the searcher after words and their meanings. Unfortunately the vowel marking is not always reliable; any future edition should be carefully checked again to rectify all markings.

3. The latest current orthography has been used, filling a weakness of the previous edition, and certain niceties brought out, such as the use of *k'h* for aspirated *k* (as in *k'haki*) in distinction from the normal Sotho pronunciation of *kh*.

4. A large increase in vocabulary has been recorded, including modern accepted acquisitions, and particularly a large collection of ideophones.

5. The perfect and passive forms of verbs have been added, giving valuable information, particularly where palatalization or alveolarization has taken place.

One criticism is in the lack of any tonal recording. One finds, in the dictionary, two or more entries with the same spelling, one marked by the figure [1] the others by [2] and [3] respectively, as for instance on page 300, *leqala* [1] (whip stick), *leqala* [2] (Schizoglossum plant), *leqala* [3] (rooi reebok). Nowhere is it explained what the figures mean. Do they indicate different tone forms? Or do they merely indicate supposed different origins? The indication of tone is especially necessary in the case of ideophones; but here again not attempt has been made to shew them, as for instance in the case of the two entries under *kiti* (on page 175).

This dictionary is an important contribution and reflects great credit on the reviser and on the Morija Printing Works who have produced it very well.

C. M. D.

Colour and Culture in South Africa. SHEILA PATTERSON. (Routledge, London: 1953.) 402 pp., 30/–.

The Cape Coloured people are a good subject for social study. They are not separated from the student by speaking a different language from him, a barrier that impedes close contact with ordinary Africans and Indians. They are also concentrated in areas where transport and other facilities are comparatively good. Yet, curiously enough, there has been no first-rate book written about the Cape Coloured people since Professor J. S. Marais published his History years ago. Mrs. Patterson is an Englishwoman who spent a few industrious years studying "The status of the Coloured people within the social structure of South Africa." She was guided by anthropologists, but in fact she has rightly approached her subject as a sociologist influenced by recent American studies of the Negroes. Unfortunately, American sociologists lack confidence in their own capacity to handle materials and issues that are controversial if not explosive, and they then take refuge in a jargon that grates on readers who do not believe that words should be used to

conceal one's real thoughts. In adopting the current jargon, Mrs. Patterson tries the reader's patience, and he will need persistence to wade through these 200 pages, supported by another 200 pages of footnotes, many of some length. There was no need, even from the academic angle, for the author to burden her book in this fashion. If she had spent less time in gathering sinppets of material from every conceivable source and more time in thinking about the true significance of her material, she would have written a more mature book. Curiously enough, she makes no use of Professor Edward Batson's social surveys. The best chapter is one on the internal structure of the Coloured community, indicating a range of social life and distinctions hardly known to white people. We need to know much more about the psychology of the Coloureds. Why, for instance, did they remain unmoved by the recent campaign of passive resistance? Why do they lack independent middle-class leaders? Is this due to the general weakness of their economic position compared with Indians and Africans? Why has colour prejudice against them increased at a time when they were rising in the economic and social scale? These and other vital questions come to mind. If they occurred to Mrs. Patterson, she has not answered them. Her book remains a valuable mine of assorted materrials in which others will quarry when they search for the right answers.

J. L.

Sebopeho sa Puo. Karolo I. B. MAKALO KHAKETLA. (Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, Johannesburg: 1951.) iv + 252 pp., 10/–.

The method of grammatical analysis which was first used by Prof. C. M. Doke in his *Text-book of Zulu Grammar* in 1927 is now widely accepted for Bantu languages and has been used in a number of monographs written in English. This is the first grammar written through the medium of a Bantu language that applies this method and, to my knowledge, it is also the first detailed grammar written through the medium of a Bantu language. Two urgent needs have been met by the publication of this book. Like other Bantu languages in South Africa, Southern Sotho is now taught in most African schools through the medium of the vernacular, and to save teachers the trouble of translating existing grammars a work of this nature was overdue. Secondly, Southern Sotho was in need of a modern grammar employing modern principles of classification, the only work of this nature being Prof. B. I. C. van Eeden's *Inleiding tot die studie van Suid-Sotho* which is a closed book to those who cannot read Afrikaans (unfortunately still too many). This book will certainly fill that gap.

The author has acquitted himself well in the very difficult task of coining new words to render in Southern Sotho numerous phonetical and grammatical terms. Whatever its shortcomings, it is certainly a good start on which he can build in the future. There is a lot of new information found in this book, no doubt due to the fact that the author was following *The Zulu Grammar* closely, and looked for corresponding phenomena in Southern Sotho; he was thus saved the danger of missing points which others before him may have overlooked. Two good examples are his treatment of the Ideophone and of Compound Nouns.

Unfortunately, this close following of the Zulu Text-book has led the author astray in some cases. Thus, apparently in his eagerness to find forms equivalent to the Zulu Quantitative Pronouns formed with the Adjectival numeral roots *–bili*, *–thathu*, *–ne* and *–hlanu*, he gives the forms *ba-babeli*, *ba-bararo*, *ba-banè*, *ba-bahlano* as Quantitatives, and fails to see that there is no difference between these and the Adjectives, unlike the case in Zulu. Similarly certain phenomena which are not found in Zulu (and therefore not in the Zulu Text-book) are left out, e.g. alveolarization.

The current Southern Sotho orthography is disjunctive, and any grammatical treatise following the conjunctive word-division in Southern Sotho must either give the examples written conjunctively or indicate by means of hyphens where the parts of a word should be joined. To leave the examples written disjunctively, as in

this publication, is to cause confusion. It is difficult to understand why this was done, especially as in some cases (e.g. possessives *oa-ka, ba-hae* and adjectives *e-mong, ba-batšo*) hyphens are employed. If this had been followed consistently, it might have saved the author from being suspected of treating stems as complete words in some cases. An introductory section explaining the conjunctive word-division was called for, as it is the basis of this whole method of approach which, it must be borne in mind, is strange to Sotho speakers and, to many, suspect. The author should have followed Jacottet's example and marked the semi-vowels, not just the vowels.

There are numerous errors throughout the book which cannot be listed here. It is to be hoped that these will be corrected when a second edition of this praiseworthy landmark is published.

S. M. MOFOKENG.

Meokho ea Thabo. B. MAKALO KHAKETLA. (Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, Johannesburg: 1951.) iv + 229 pp., 10/–.

The hero of this novel is one Moeketsi. His father dies when he is still very young. His uncle becomes his guardian. After passing the sixth standard, Moeketsi is sent to Mariazell Institution where he is trained as a teacher and where he also falls in love with a girl from Matatiele. But his uncle will have none of that. Moeketsi must marry the girl whom he, the uncle, has chosen for him, according to the old Sotho custom. Both are adamant, and Moeketsi decides to leave his home, and goes to Durban without telling anybody. He works there. His uncle travels to Durban hoping to find him. He discovers that Durban is not the small village he thought it was, and returns empty-handed. In Durban Moeketsi falls in love with a girl from Basutoland, called Fumane. He returns home hoping to find his uncle changed, but in this he is disappointed. To his surprise, however, he finds that the girl chosen by his uncle for him is none other than Fumane.

This novel is bound to be popular with many Sotho readers. The scenes depicting Moeketsi's childhood, his college days, his days as a teacher, his quarrel with his uncle — these and many others cover such a wide field that they are bound to interest a wide range of readers, many of whom will no doubt find similar incidents out of their own lives; for *Meokho ea Thabo* is a novel of to-day, depicting these days just as *Pitseng* is a novel of yesterday. The book is written in good Sotho, and is full of amusing incidents, with a clever plot. And yet after reading through it one feels that there is something lacking, something needed to make it an evergreen like Mofolo's *Chaka*. All emphasis has been on the plot, and at the end one feels one has been busy with episode after episode, but has failed to delve deep into the characters. It is depth that this nicely-bound novel lacks.

S. M. MOFOKENG.

Geschichte Afrikas. DIEDRICH H. WESTERMANN. (Greven-Verlag, Köln: 1952.) xi + 492 pp., 58 plates, 20 maps, £4. 2*s*.

As a result of fifty years of investigation concerning Africa and its peoples, Prof. Westermann presents a comprehensive work on the events of fifteen centuries of the history of the African continent south of the Sahara. The material for this book was extracted from many sources treating with the traditions of the African tribes, their ethnography and languages, as correlated with ancient Arabic and European history and with the author's personal field experiences during the years 1910, 1914, 1921, 1928, 1929 and 1933. As the book was printed twice and twice was destroyed towards the end of the war, we can only admire Prof. Westermann's enterprise in revising and reprinting this valuable book.

We are here made acquainted with details of the rise and fall of great African kingdoms and empires which maintained their power for centuries, but whose names are not generally known except among specialists. This information is now embodied in the record of world history. The author throws light on more than sixty kingdoms, most of whose origins have their roots in mythology.

While most of the African states reveal more or less clear-cut characteristics, those of some of the south-eastern Bantu, especially the Sotho-Tswana are not so clearly and elaborately described as the others. The south-eastern Bantu are merely interrelated tribal groups, a fact which was not sufficiently appreciated in the literature available to Prof. Westermann when he wrote his book. The chapter on South Africa contains some inaccuracies. The chapters on the Matebele kingdom, on that of Monomotapa and on the early inhabitants of the ruined cities in South East Africa are short.

The contents of the book are purely historical, although Prof. Westermann describes the geographical, economical and social characteristics of a kingdom whenever its historical development is explained thereby. He also draws comparisons between the character of the various states and their peoples. He invites attention to characteristics which African states have in common: how slowly African culture changes, the isolation of the African states who combine only to attack their neighbours for the purpose of raids and looting. The ancient African was content with a poor civilization and did not assimilate many of the new ideas which he was quite capable of absorbing.

Although it is not so stated, the history of the ancient Africans and the character of their culture are to a certain extent a background against which modern aspirations and movements towards a separatist African independence may be understood.

P.-L. E. Breutz.